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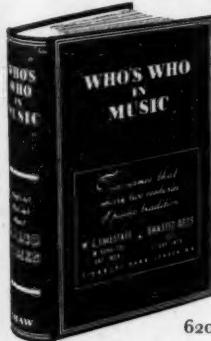
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The Development of a Mozart Melody

BY

ISTVÁN BARNA

IF one studies Mozart's art at all thoroughly, one observes that in many of his works, from all periods, certain melodies and melodic types constantly reappear. The most characteristic of these is the so-called *Jupiter* theme, a melody of Gregorian origin first used by Mozart in his Symphony in E flat, K.16, and occurring, either in its entirety or in some disguised form, in at least ten of his later compositions. Normally, such recurring melodies are not so individually Mozartean, but belong to the stereotyped *buffo* or tragic styles of the period. They may be found in works from all periods of Mozart's life, from the very earliest to the very latest.

However, among these recurring melodies there is one which, through its own strictly logical development, reveals Mozart's own inner development: the subsidiary subject of the clarinet Quintet, K.581. It appears in various examples in a rather mature and developed form; but I found its original source quite by chance when playing the C major piano Sonata, K.279; bars 15-16 of the first movement.



It is true that this is just a rather conventional cadential passage of an early work, but it acquires interest from the fact that the same formula is developed further in the third movement of the same Sonata: bars 13-14.



In this case the melody is no longer a mere cadential passage, but is the logical development of a subsidiary semiquaver passage in the main theme; yet undoubtedly related to the passage quoted in Ex. 1.

Another example of this melody is in the principal subject of the first movement of the D major string Quartet, K.575:



This differs from the previous ones in two important respects. The first is that the semiquavers become quavers, though owing to the speed of the movement, the theme is not appreciably slower. The second is much more

important: the melody is neither a mere cadential passage nor even a development passage, but the second, "feminine" half of a characteristically Mozartean ambivalent sonata theme. The reader should not be confused by the comparatively high Köchel number of this composition, nor by its generally accepted date—1789. I shall have to return to this problem later.

The same melody, again in a new form, next appears in the introductory Adagio of the *Haffner Serenade*, K.250.



Again it takes on a new aspect: slow and expressive, melodically rounded off, it has become an independent melodic factor equal in importance to the bars that precede and follow it.

Then we find it again appearing in the second movement of the piano Sonata, K.309, with the same melodic form and significance, yet formally going one step further still, for in this single movement six different variations occur. (I quote here only two variants.)

We next find it in its most extended and best-known form as the second subject of the clarinet Quintet, K.581.



Here, from the original melody a complete subsidiary theme has developed, and more richly than usual; for immediately after the first presentation it appears again in the minor key; and in the recapitulation—in addition to the normal, tonic repetition—this minor variant occurs in yet another form.

The final appearances of our melody are in *The Magic Flute*. It may be a coincidence—if the thousand inner laws of creation that a musical genius obeys can ever be considered a matter of chance—that here, as in the first work in which it appeared, the melody occurs in two places: first in the B flat major trio, No. 19:



where it again has a new formal function as the first half of one of the dominant sections of this almost "through-composed" scene; second, in the introductory Andante to the final chorus:



where the basic germ, the very essence of the melody, appears naked and undisguised after all the different forms it has assumed during the course of its development.

Now let us look at these variants and see how they compare with one another. In the first place they all consist of the successive notes of a triad, decorated with passing- and changing-notes. Then looking at the relative accents, we are immediately struck by the characteristic rôle of the intervals of the third and fourth. The extracts correspond too, in that in the first third they work up to the climax of the melody, and in the remaining two-thirds gradually fall back to a point of rest. The rough outline of the melody is in each case a six-four chord, to which the sixth degree of the scale, strictly speaking an added sixth, is joined. Only in the falling back is there any essential difference between the variants. Some stop on one or other note of the basic harmony, but most of them slip down cadentially towards the dominant; this depends of course on the function of the melody in each particular case. Further explanation is hardly necessary, for it is in the nature of music that when its function is more or less cadential, *i.e.* intended to create a point of rest, then it naturally stops on one of the notes of the basic harmony, whereas if the melody is continuing its course, then it usually leans towards another key, chiefly towards its dominant.

* * * * *

Köchel's catalogue of Mozart's work, now commonly in use, can easily lead to numerous misunderstandings. The latest revision and the opinion of Wyzewa and Saint-Foix differ in many respects, for research has still not been able to date some of Mozart's works accurately. This is the case with the D major string Quartet, K.575. In the third edition of Köchel, Einstein writes, among other points about this Quartet, that Mozart, in 1789, suddenly being unable to find a new theme, reverted to some older sketches. He considers that Mozart wrote the exposition of the first movement possibly about 1770, in his "Italian" period.¹ But at the International Congress of Musicology in New York (1939) he said about this first movement: "... Mozart sketched it right up into the development section about the year 1772, and did not complete it until 1789".² From this we see that in 1939 Einstein attributes

¹ Page 725: "... aus dem Autograph, sowohl aus Schriftbild wie Papier, geht ... deutlich hervor, dass die Themen des 1 und 2 Satzes aus sehr viel früherer, vielleicht aus der italienischen Zeit Mozarts (um 1770!) stammen".

² In his lecture: "Mozart's Handwriting and the Creative Process"; published in *Papers Read at the International Congress of Musicology* (p. 151), held at New York, 11th to 16th September, 1939. (American Musical Society, New York, 1944.)

a different date to the early sketches, from the one he gives in his edition of Köchel in 1937. He very convincingly points out that neither the handwriting nor the manuscript paper belong to 1789. But is it quite certain that the sketches were made in 1770 or in 1772? For this Quartet, even in the exposition of the first movement, is much more mature and developed technically than the works of 1770. I am reluctant to argue with a scholar of Einstein's standing but I am inclined not to believe that even he would maintain that the exposition of this first movement is at the same rather undeveloped stage as those of the quartets K.155–160, which were really written in 1772. Is it not possible that the D major Quartet was begun only in 1775 or 1776? The C major Sonata already mentioned (K.279) dates from the summer of 1774.³ If we try to approach the problem of dates not on the basis of material proofs, but rather intuitively, on logical evolutionary grounds, we instinctively feel that the piano Sonata was written before the sketches of the D major Quartet.

If we accept this supposition that the date of these sketches is really 1775–76, the development and formation of the melody in question show a surprising agreement with the development of music in general, and in particular of Sonata-form. In this a theme is given; in the course of further development, the possibilities offered by this theme are used increasingly until at the end its most important and characteristic elements are re-stated. Let us compare this development with that of the melody under discussion.

1774

The melody appears in the first movement of the C major piano Sonata as a conventional cadential passage. By its very cadential character it differs from the other forms of the melody; only the triad basis and the use of changing-notes are identical. In the third movement of the same work there is an organic continuation of the main thought, a breaking up of the harmonic material of the second subject.

In Sonata-form: the main theme appears, then later, well before the development section, reappears in a new light.

1775–76?

In the Quartet the melody serves a more important purpose. It is no longer a stereotyped cadence, but one of the real parts of a musical sentence. It is interesting that even Mozart does not realize here the extraordinary intensity of the melody: when the viola repeats the main theme (at the thirteenth bar) he completely changes the melody, and retains only the harmonic germ in simple thirds.

This developed form of the melody is very significant in relation to Mozart's development at that time. Continuing the Sonata-form analogy this version corresponds to the working-out section.

³ Köchel, p. 263: "Komp. * im Sommer 1774 in Salzburg".

1776

The slow introduction to the finale of the *Haffner* Serenade, like the kindred types of Adagios and Andantes in general, is not bound to any strict form. Every single bar is of equal value. A new stage of development is represented by the slow tempo, in consequence of which every note acquires greater significance.

In Sonata-form this version corresponds to some point towards the end of the movement—perhaps in the recapitulation, perhaps in the coda—where the germ from which the whole movement has grown is usually to be discovered.

1777

In the slow movement of the C major piano Sonata, written during Mozart's stay in Mannheim, we find traces of our melody in six different variants. The capricious changes follow a certain programme, for the movement is an attempt to paint a "portrait" of the daughter of the Mannheim composer Cannabich. The theme occurs in two different versions in each "A"-section of this movement in AABA-form.

If we had any doubts about the Sonata-form analogy of the melodic version we encountered in the *Haffner* Serenade, this removes them entirely; the melodic form corresponds here to the coda. The harmonization of the melody becomes almost complete, and Mozart takes six different opportunities to establish the same basic idea.

* * * * *

Here, however, I must break off my argument, as Mozart himself broke off for thirteen or fourteen years. What did happen in 1789? According to Einstein's evidence Mozart returned to the old sketches, wrote the development and recapitulation, finished the previously begun second movement, wrote two other movements to go with them, and dedicated the Quartet, together with two others, to the King of Prussia. Thirteen years is a long time, especially in Mozart's short life. In 1776 he had hardly grown out of his musical adolescence, but in 1789 he was composing his last works. Between then and his death he wrote only fifty works, and among them court dances, quite valueless from the point of view of his own development. We are therefore perfectly justified in treating this intervening period as a complete break, and must regard the further developments to which Mozart subjected the melody of the D major string Quartet, in 1789, as a new starting-point.

* * * * *

1789

In the Quartet, Mozart again discovered the long-forgotten theme, which, at a previous stage of his development, he had already carried to the most perfect degree of expressiveness.

Taking into consideration the fact that we are dealing with a new creative period, we must regard the new developments of the melody as parts of a new

Sonata-form. The occurrence of the melody thus corresponds to a new exposition.

In the clarinet Quintet, the two-bar idea gives rise to two different developments. On the one hand it grows, by means of sequential repetitions and thematic fragments, into a complete musical period (*i.e.* sentence). On the other hand, in the course of the movement, we find three different versions of the melody.

This is the most complete exploitation of the possibilities of the melody, and, continuing the Sonata-form analogy, undoubtedly corresponds to the development section.

1791

In *The Magic Flute*, Mozart was under the obligation to write a popular work, suitable for a suburban public. But—if it is true that an artist, whose life should be a continuous development, necessarily writes his greatest works at the end of his life—*The Magic Flute* was also to be Mozart's greatest stage-work. There are those who value *Don Giovanni* or *Figaro* higher. Whether they are right or not, there is no doubt that *The Magic Flute* is at least the equal of Mozart's most mature and greatest vocal compositions. How characteristic then, that in this swan-song the recurring melody should appear—twice—for the last time. On both occasions it seems like a summing up, final and irrevocable. The melody which in the clarinet Quintet had blossomed out into a complete, repeated period, here closes up again; first into a two-bar motive in quavers, and finally, dense and concentrated in crotchets. But the diminution only adds to the intensity. Mozart's life-work in general is a curious mixture of melodic lavishness and strict artistic economy. *The Magic Flute* is one of the richest examples of this curious duality. Only he who has the gift of melody can be lavish with it, and Mozart had such a natural genius for melodic invention that he could allow himself the extravagance of placing this painfully bitter-sweet melody—destined from its very birth for the expression of combined despair and hope, nostalgia and faith—for a mere fleeting second upon the lips of the lover Tamino as, trusting in the gods, he prepared for a bitter parting before the trials he was to undergo. Finally, our melody appears in the soprano part of the chorus.

This final refinement of such formal elements often happens consciously in Beethoven; and in Bartók's late works it is almost according to rule that at the end of the movement the original formula from which the whole composition has arisen is re-introduced. In Mozart this was merely an instinctive gesture, but it is in the nature of music that this kind of permanent, condensed form should appear at the end of a composition. It can also be found in the music of older times, as for instance in the closing stretti of fugal compositions. In the Sonata-form, the forms of our melody in *The Magic Flute* correspond to the recapitulation and coda.

Thus we find a perfect analogy between the development undergone by the melody in question, and one of the strictest forms of musical composition. I must emphasize that I chose Sonata-form for this analogy because this was the most perfect and characteristic form of Mozart's time.

This little study does not and cannot make any claim to completeness. Thus I have ignored all the further occurrences of the melody in conventional cadential contexts, as for instance in the first phrases of the development section of the first movement of the C major piano Sonata, K.330. I must also point out that this type of melody, based on the successive notes of a triad, also occurs in Haydn, Symphony No. 82; composed in 1786, first movement, bars 6-8:



and in Beethoven, C major piano Concerto, second movement, bars 9-10:



Moreover, it is to be found throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. Its perhaps most trivial appearance is in Gounod's *Faust*, at the beginning of the aria: "Faites-lui mes aveux":



But, even in this unfinished form, I trust that this article may make appeal for, and an instinctive introduction to a branch of musicology hitherto neglected, namely: comparative melodic research in Mozart's art.

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Un Ballo in Massachusetts

BY

VINCENT GODEFROY

ON the night of the Ides of March, 1792, King Gustav III of Sweden was assassinated at a masked ball in Stockholm by Count Ankarström, a political opponent. On the evening of 14th January, 1858, the Emperor Napoleon III was nearly murdered by Orsini's bombs while on his way to a gala at the Paris Opéra. The Emperor, his hat pierced by shrapnel, and the Empress, her white cloak splashed with the blood of a less fortunate general, entered the Opéra and commanded the performance to continue. The gala consisted of excerpts from *Masaniello*, *William Tell*, *Mary Stuart*, and *Gustav III*. Four separate exhibitions of rebellion or regicide made too strong a dish for such an occasion, and the *Gustav III* ballet was curtailed.

About a month before this sensation, Verdi had completed an opera on the subject of Gustav's murder at the masked ball in Stockholm. It was his only experience of setting to music a plot based on modern history. Gustav had been killed only twenty-one years before Verdi's birth. It is hardly surprising that the authorities at Naples, where this *Gustavo Terzo* was to be given, decided against it in its existing form. Verdi and his librettist Antonio Somma therefore substituted Pomerania for Sweden; and this jump across the Baltic, together with a new and non-committal title *Una Vendetta in Domino*, was submitted to the Censorship and would presumably have been passed but for the untimely outrage at the Paris Opéra. There was now no chance at all in the Kingdom of Naples for a work which dealt, even in disguise, with a royal assassination. The authorities blue-pencilled Somma's scenario so drastically that Verdi felt bound to withdraw his opera. There were lawsuits and counter-claims, until finally Gustav III of Sweden arrived at Rome instead of Naples masquerading as Riccardo, Earl of Warwick, Governor of the English Colony of Massachusetts. The Royal Palace of Stockholm became Government House at Boston, and the period was set back by a hundred years to the reign of William III. With the whole Atlantic lying between, the Censorship was obliged to call off the pursuit.

The opera was now called *Un Ballo in Maschera**; for it was the lot of the unfortunate Earl of Warwick to be slain at a masked ball in place of King Gustav; and however many changes of name, nationality and period the characters had to undergo, that masked ball must remain static. It was the crux and catastrophe of the whole story, the one thing that would really make it worth while. The idea of death stalking amid the dancers, of the muffled murderers searching for their masked victim, was irresistible. And it could be done as grimly at Boston as at Stockholm.

* For review of the recent production at the Edinburgh Festival, see page 296. The His Master's Voice records are reviewed on page 320 [Ed.].

The writer who first seized on this dramatic event was the prolific Eugène Scribe who, though he counts for nothing nowadays, was then a considerable figure in the world of French literature, with over 350 theatrical works to his credit,—or rather to the credit of his many assistants. For Scribe collaborated freely with others, though he always kept the reputation for himself, and was eccentric enough to plan his plays so that their titles began with every letter of the alphabet,—a curious ambition. Scribe also provided Meyerbeer, Halévy and Auber with libretti on the grand scale. But his obstinate pride had met its match in Verdi when he wrote *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* for him, and the composer did not find it faultless. One of Scribe's favourite devices was to take a single dramatic moment out of past history and place it at the climax of a romantic story. He had done this in *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, using the famous massacre as a final curtain after five acts of theatrical banality. So his presentation of the masked ball at Stockholm was preceded by a variety of happenings essential to the filling out of an evening's entertainment; but of that inevitable sweep towards doom which runs through every great tragedy there is little trace. As in *The Last Days of Pompeii* the certain catastrophe looms over the whole story. It is coming; and however the protagonists behave, it will come. It does not spring from motive or character. It is a fixed finale, and was there even before the tale was written. So whatever Gustav and his friends or foes do, Gustav will be assassinated at the masked ball. There can be no escape for him.

This method of Scribe's is very important in a study of Verdi's opera, for where the man of the theatre may visualize a grand climax in a brilliant dance scene, an operatic version will have been dealing in music all the way from the overture, and so the ball will not follow with such force as it might have done at the end of a spoken play. Whatever material Scribe might pile on in front of his final gala, it is that masked ball which is the apex of the plot. The modern method might begin with the ball and then fill out the evening with sleuths hunting down the killer; but the romantic Scribe libretto was written the other way round. First, the murder: then a story of sorts leading up to and accounting for it. But if Scribe's drama was constructed backwards from the catastrophe, Verdi was not accustomed to write music backwards. He must forge ahead from situation to situation. And as dance music was never his strongest point, he could not give the final scene that grand sense of musical climax that Scribe had no doubt envisaged. So in Verdi's opera the characters and the plot get more than their due, while the ballet-finale undoubtedly gets less. It is interesting to note that Auber's version, *Gustave III ou le Bal Masqué*, went the usual way of works that failed to hold a place in the Parisian repertoire. It was broken up, and individual acts were given with other operas; and in this way Scribe's plot disappeared, while the ballet-finale was detached and mounted over eighty times before the public finally tired of it. No producer would dream of jettisoning the bulk of *Un Ballo in Maschera* and putting on the ball scene alone. Auber's work dutifully followed Scribe's conception: Verdi's, although transferred to North America, raises its stature beyond its deserts.

So in this opera it is not the ball that counts, but the people who go to it; the host and his guests. Very clear musical portraits of them have been built up through three acts. None of them has the dramatic greatness of such previous Verdian figures as Rigoletto, Azucena, Violetta, or Boccanegra. That inner conflict which makes the true tragic character is hardly developed here, but instead they are sharply set against a background of dramatic irony that compels in us a keen appreciation of their problems. We can soon enough forget that the good colonists of Boston, Mass., are not likely to have behaved quite in this way. We can forget all about Boston, and all about Stockholm too, in this universal tale of a fundamentally decent man and a respectable married woman fighting against mutual infatuation. Mr. Noel Coward wrote a charming film on just such a subject. Verdi's opera too might have turned to comedy, but for that inevitable masked ball. Much of the music suggests that he could well have made it so. But his comedy was not yet.

There are two themes that lead to the ultimate doom of Riccardo. His enemies are plotting against him, and he is possessed of this infatuation for his secretary's wife. At first they are separate paths of danger, but later they will be united to seal his fate. Verdi gives a musical motive to each of these themes, and states them in the prelude. At the very beginning of the opening scene we can identify these motives, for the conspirators sing theirs and Riccardo's lyrical reverie is built out of his. But at the end of the ensemble the orchestra plays both motives together. It is so unusual for Verdi, who used themes sparingly, to combine two together symphonically, that one must read in these few bars a definite premonition of the disaster that awaits Riccardo. Although the first two scenes of the opera are light-hearted enough for any comedy, Verdi is careful to issue a brief warning before the fun begins. The force of destiny always exercised a strong pull on his creative muse.

The tragedy of *Un Ballo in Maschera*, if tragedy it can be called, is that of a man who supposes all's right with the world simply because he himself has no cares. It is the tragedy of one whose face is so full of smiles that he does not see the frowns on the faces of others. This Earl of Warwick (and there *was* an Earl of Warwick who owned lands in New England, though he was never Governor of Massachusetts) has a disposition more English than is usually noticed. He has been tough towards his enemies in the past, but once he has triumphed over them, and is himself secure, the hatchet is quickly buried and their continued enmity is an idea too absurd for credence. Everything is smooth because he wants it to be smooth. Mutterings of trouble are met with a deaf ear. He is a gentleman living among gentlemen, and if he indulges in a harmless flutter with someone else's wife, it is all above board and will end with a handshake. But his secretary happens not to be a gentleman, but a Creole; and it ends with a knife-wound. Many critics have smiled at the idea of this Creole secretary. But how cunningly it all works out in fact! What puritan colonist would have stabbed a man at a masked ball? What Creole might not?

The opera begins with the assembled courtiers awaiting Riccardo's appearance at his morning levée. A chorus is divided between the "Officers

and Gentlemen", who sing a smug stanza in praise of the Earl, and "Samuel, Tom and their Adherents", who voice their hatred in the angular staccato of their special theme. Samuel and Tom, who have no specified social status, and apparently no surnames, are standing in for Counts Horn and Warting, the disaffected noblemen of Sweden. It is almost impossible not to be slightly amused by their inclusion in the programme; but at least they get through the opera without being addressed by name; and as their arrival is usually announced by their theme in the orchestra, they are so strongly identified with the undercurrent of vengeance that it does not matter a scrap that the printed programme calls them Samuel and Tom.*

There is perhaps something rather naive about the Ruritanian swagger of Riccardo's entry and the very obvious disaffection of the malcontent party. But the music of the conspirators is interesting, for it may mark Verdi's conscious portrayal of the northern, un-Latin characteristics of the Swedish original. The fugue-like plotting of Samuel and Tom is done with cold efficiency. The robust, infectious conjurations of the older operas are now exchanged for a dry, biting theme as spare and northerly as the *En Saga* of Sibelius. Like all Verdi's little touches, it hits the mark through its very simplicity.

In the somewhat old-fashioned structure of this scene we are then introduced in turn to Renato the Creole secretary and Oscar the page. Our first response to Renato is very slight; for whereas we might expect a grand tenor-baritone duet to develop out of his first dialogue with Riccardo, their fine, flexible phrases give place to an aria for Renato extremely tame both in melody and construction. No wonder Riccardo does not heed his secretary's warning, when it is couched in such drab terms. But if we are apt to overlook Renato, there is no missing Oscar. He is Verdi's Cherubino, pert and pushing, and with a very definite part to play in the drama. The Chief Justice demands the extradition of a sorceress named Ulrica. Oscar defends her in two bright stanzas embroidered with coloratura. His enthusiasm is infectious, for Riccardo takes it up and opens the stretta with a *leggierissimo* passage very undignified for an Earl of Warwick (or King of Sweden), but so gay, so almost vulgarly merry in its development, that the pervading sense of fun bursts out far beyond the confines of tragic drama. This is *opera buffa* and nothing else.

The rollicking ensemble that ends the scene is built round Riccardo's announcement that he will visit the sorceress Ulrica in the guise of a fisherman. The next scene shows this Ulrica in her cave singing a satanic incantation over her cauldron to impress the horoscope-struck people who have come to watch her antics. The transatlantic migration has changed this Scandinavian weird

* The location and names in this opera have been variously altered from time to time. Boston has been changed to Naples, or other Renaissance Italian courts. Amelia becomes Adelia, Oscar is Edgar, and Samuel and Tom are rendered more digestible by being called Samuele and Tommaso, which is as quaint as Bardolfo and Pistola, who, incidentally, owe not a little to their Bostonian prototypes. The recent recording of the complete opera omits all geographical references; while the production at Edinburgh by the Glyndebourne Company imitated this, and referred to Riccardo as "the Prince".

sister into a negress. Can it be that Verdi and his librettist really meant her to be a native Indian? If so, they were luckier than they knew; for there was in Massachusetts at this very period an Indian woman named Tituba who was nearly hanged for practising wild incantations. But however this may be, the dark, sinister scoring that introduces Ulrica in her cavern has a distinctly Erda-like flavour. This Ulrica is no Latin Sibyl. Her music, like that of Samuel and Tom, is the music of the north as far as Verdi's imagination could reach it.

In the scene of the cavern the gullible peasants at first, and the sceptical courtiers later, prolong the light-hearted atmosphere of the previous finale. But the implicit reverence of the people and the jaunty ridicule of Riccardo's party are clearly contrasted. The general tempo of this scene is one of comedy, and the orchestra tosses phrases about fluidly in early preparation for *Falstaff*. Faced with a succession of near-vaudeville business, Verdi has worked out this scene very conscientiously, treating its theatrical commonplaces with a high level of musical skill. The value of the score here far exceeds that of the libretto, and a scene which is trivial in construction becomes a delight to listen to.

In this cavern we at last meet Amelia, the lady who will cause such trouble between two friends. Her precise nationality is left to the imagination, but unlike the gay people of the court she believes in the occult powers of Ulrica sufficiently to crave a private audience. Her desperate hope is to learn some way of ending her guilty infatuation. Ulrica tells her to gather some herbs at midnight from the foot of a gibbet. Riccardo overhears this in hiding, and determines to be there. Amelia's appearance is brief, and emotionally keyed up by an orchestral figure that denotes urgency. For a moment her voice soars in the true curve of a Verdian heroine. This at last is a snatch of *opera seria*; but when she is gone the fun begins again. The disguised Riccardo resumes his gaiety, and Ulrica's forecast of his imminent death makes him laugh his way through a quintet in which Oscar, hitherto a bundle of high spirits, is suddenly cowed, which is precisely how an immature mind would re-act to the occult. But only the most immature minds in the audience would be impressed by the obvious irony of Scribe's contriving, when Riccardo, warned that he will be slain by the next man with whom he shakes hands, sees Renato enter and rushes forward to greet him. Ulrica's powers have been insufficient to penetrate Riccardo's disguise: small wonder that the Earl pardons her, since her sorcery seems so harmlessly fraudulent. But here there lurks a deeper ironical twist; for Amelia believed in her skill, and because of Amelia's credulity, her sombre prediction is fated to come true. The act ends with a general hymn of praise which would have fitted into the score of *Aida*, but is absurdly grand for a witch's cavern.

As soon as the second act opens we know that the real opera has begun at last. The scaffolding has been removed and the drama is starkly revealed. Once more the orchestra paints the rugged, pine-clad austerity of the north. As Amelia is seen stumbling towards the gibbet we may recall Sieglinde arriving at the mountain pass. The wood-wind and strings then play the flowing melody

that may be called the theme of her desperate courage, but is never heard again, and in a powerful recitative and rich aria she achieves real tragic stature. Riccardo appears for the inevitable love-duet, but this is as nobly intense as the previous aria, except perhaps for the formal and *Traviata*-like cabaletta. Mr. Dyneley Hussey attributes the passionate depth of this duet to the fact that Verdi "had already created two credible and adult characters to take part in it". I am not sure that either has so far behaved credibly or like an adult in the previous scenes; but they certainly command our attention now, in their ardent exchange of lyrical enthusiasm over a flowing orchestra. This is the first Italian operatic love duet that is not an exercise in prettiness.

Then irony creeps back into the story. Renato has overheard the conspirators on their way to kill Riccardo, and forestalls them by hurrying to the gibbet. Amelia veils herself while her husband urges the Earl to flee. It is a pity that Verdi, who was growing to dislike convention, could not always shake it off, for here, as at the end of the Nile scene in *Aida*, a static trio intervenes, which rapid music cannot save from a certain absurdity. The score has *sempre sotto voce*, but in performance the agitation usually finishes up *fortissimo*, which is no more dramatically questionable than the approach of Samuel, Tom and their party singing the motive of conspiracy as they come to trap the Earl. But of course they have lost him, and they arrive to find Renato trustfully preparing, at Riccardo's bidding, to conduct the veiled Amelia back to Boston. This is a pleasant comedy situation, and seems to have amused Verdi; for when the conspirators close in on Renato, Amelia interposes herself to save him and her veil comes off; so that Samuel and Tom, hitherto little more than dark figures on the backcloth, indulge in a series of dry guffaws that make us think they may not, after all, be such bad fellows. But in a strange, imaginative ensemble, built with formal craftsmanship yet giving an air of piquant novelty, Verdi encircles the wrath of Renato and the anguish of Amelia with a choral mockery that is certainly not the laughter of comedy. We are never afraid lest Ford will kill Falstaff, but we know now that Renato means business, and that this story, which began with such harmless merriment, is destined to end in bloodshed.

The third act has no prelude. An angry blare of brass, a few turbulent bars, and Renato, back at home, is brandishing a sword and threatening his wife with instant death. His fury and her despair may remind us of the old melodrama, but the terse phrasing of the voices and the ferocious, restless orchestra that delineates them recall *Trovatore* only because they have left it so far behind. Renato, who has up to now failed to pull his weight as a major character, leaps into the saddle and rides the opera hard downhill towards the catastrophe. If we connived before at Riccardo's careless amiability, we now heartily wish he had not played with fire. The initiative is no longer with him. Amelia pleads to be allowed to see her child before she is killed. Her aria saves her life, for it gives Renato time to cool down a little and think out a more subtle policy; but the soprano had to have a second opportunity, and it is never possible to forget this convention while she kneels and pours out her pleading. Renato dismisses her coldly, and

turning to a portrait of his master and friend the Earl, sings the celebrated "Eri tu" which, standing halfway between Rigoletto's "Pari siamo" and Iago's "Credo", marks more than any other solo the transition of Verdi's thought. All the emotions of a loyal man whose trust in the loyalty of those he loves is suddenly shattered, all the memories of a sweet past which has been soured and will never be enjoyed again, flow through the forty-odd bars of this aria and make it seem, like a sonnet, to hold long hours of experience within its brief limits. The lyrical cadence of its close still haunts our minds as the dry, fugal theme of the conspirators comes to break the spell. Following upon such beauty it sounds more sinister than before; for now these cold-blooded men are on Renato's side, and the way to revenge lies open.

As soon as Samuel and Tom are satisfied that their erstwhile enemy is wholly with them, lots are drawn for the killing of Riccardo. By yet another stroke of theatrical irony, Amelia is summoned to make the draw, and destiny decrees that Renato shall do the deed. Here Verdi, with a design similar to that which he would later use for the *Aida* judgment scene and Otello's approach to Desdemona's bedside, conjures suspense in the simplest way. But some atavistic impulse prompted him to serve up a four-square tune that belongs more properly to those bygone days when Rossini is said to have called him a "helmeted musician". Memories of past conspiracies proved too strong.

In direct contrast to the sonority of the conjuration the orchestra trills daintily as Oscar enters. The vivacious page, whose musical tread is as light as that of Samuel and Tom is heavy, brings Riccardo's invitation to the masked ball. Renato accepts for himself and his wife, while Samuel and Tom, though they do not appear to have been invited, look forward to it with grim anticipation. The sprightly Oscar dominates the ensemble, but his high spirits are as ironical as the passing merrymakers outside the dying Violetta's bedroom. A flash of silver intensifies the gathering clouds. The music sparkles, but it is comedy no longer.

It is now time for the masked ball to begin. Riccardo, seated alone, makes out a passport for Renato and his wife to return to England (a minor absurdity seeing that he is a Creole. It was Finland in the original). The scene opens with the theme of the Earl's yearning for Amelia, but it is made to sound deeply foreboding now, its original buoyancy quite lost. The aria that follows is laboured and weary, a very different utterance from the giddy sea shanty of Riccardo's carefree escapade in Ulrica's cavern. As the music of the ball's preamble is heard beyond the scene, Oscar brings him a note from an unknown woman, warning him not to attend. It is of course from Amelia, but the story does not allow him to guess this. Over the patterning of the dance he disregards the warning as he has disregarded all others. (It was, remember, the Ides of March at Stockholm.) Defiantly his voice lifts the motive of yearning to a plane of romantic heroism. We do not hear his theme again; it is never played when the lovers are together, for it only represents Riccardo's day-dream. Unlike most operatic love music, the lady does not have a share in it; which makes one think that Verdi, who knew his business

better than people often suppose, was careful to involve the Earl with the tenth commandment only, and not the seventh.

At the climax of a mounting fanfare a glittering scene of revelry is revealed. "Everything", says the libretto, "breathes magnificence and hilarity". This is at last that masked ball to which all else has been but a dramatic prelude; for through the music and the merrymaking the chief characters, all disguised in gala dress, will be converging for the catastrophe. Auber in his version had on his side the grandiose traditions of the Parisian *corps de ballet*; but Verdi's concise and economical method is to dovetail the dance into the drama, keeping his protagonists in the foreground, but using the chorus and orchestra to weave a gay fluidity round their movements. Thus there is a sense of urgency when Renato, seeking from Oscar a description of Riccardo's disguise, loses him amid the dancers and has to track him down again. In the matter of the masks we must play to the rules, for we can by now recognize the abdominal outlines of all the characters who are supposed to be concealed from one another. The spectacle of Samuel, Tom and their "adherents" lurking about in blue dominoes and red ribbons may raise a smile. But in spite of the theatre's limitations, this is theoretically an exciting situation, and Verdi's handling of the music prolongs the tension. The little song which Oscar playfully trolls to defy and baffle Renato, slight and charming in itself, carries immense dramatic weight as it hovers on the edge of disaster. Oscar, who at first seemed to be an excuse for incidental jollity, and was later used as a weapon of irony, now takes a brief and unexpectedly central place in the structure of the play. If his music throughout is culled from the various brindisies and boleros of the earlier operas, it is here refined with consistent delicacy of touch. But his solemn mockery of Renato caps a perfect miniature portrait of mischief.

Once Oscar has told Renato how he may identify the Earl, we may expect the end. But now Amelia and Riccardo meet, and she implores him to flee. Their duet, its suspense acutely heightened by the graceful dance movement that flutters beneath it, paints in two clear stanzas a woman's practical anxiety and a man's fearless idealism. They linger over their farewells, and Renato strikes.

There is a short chorus of confusion, and the dance movement trips on ironically for a few bars, to drop away into tragic silence—a grimly realistic stroke. Then the dying Riccardo, his high breeding never deserting him, in a passage that alternately halts and flows like the ebbing of life, absolves Amelia and forgives Renato. There is a short, hushed ensemble, beyond which his voice struggles on, to break in the middle of a word. Here, as so often at an opera's end, Verdi makes the heart ache by the invention of a melody so transparent that we are disarmed by the sheer accuracy of his genius. So this engaging Governor of Boston, though in fact he never lived, dies as we in England would wish him to have done—like a true gentleman. While Samuel and Tom, who willed and watched but did not do the deed, lurk prudently amid the chorus. But yet the pity of it, Samuel and Tom! O Samuel and Tom, the pity of it, Samuel and Tom!

Verdi's Attitude to His Contemporaries

BY

JOHN W. KLEIN

MANY great composers have been supremely contemptuous of their contemporaries. One remembers Wagner's attitude of hostility or, at best, of indifference towards his. Curiously enough, one frequently encounters a somewhat similar attitude on the part of the much less self-centred and more tolerant Verdi. He can, indeed, be harsh, even unfair towards some of his most gifted contemporaries; whilst, on the other hand, he is occasionally unduly appreciative of the efforts of mediocrities. He reveals most insight and generosity—and this, let us frankly admit, is a trifle tantalizing—towards the very man who had consistently ignored and belittled him and who was, in fact, his most dangerous rival: Richard Wagner.

It is no doubt true that a great artist, completely absorbed by his mission, often resents being expected to study the creations of others, or even to express an opinion upon them, particularly when they appear to have little in common with his own work. But with Verdi the opposite is generally the case. He reveals most understanding of the works of men whose art is diametrically opposed to his, and a lack of insight, at times bordering on obtuseness, in the case of composers whose aims were fundamentally akin to his own.

In spite of moments of bitter discouragement, particularly during the lengthy interval between *Aida* and *Otello* (the least creatively active and consequently perhaps the most unhappy period of his life) Verdi had a firm belief in himself and in the sureness of his judgment. He is therefore inclined to be somewhat dogmatic in his statements, expressing his opinions with a finality that will brook no argument.

At the outset of his career (and also subsequently) he was, however, exceedingly respectful of established reputations. His attitude towards Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti was at times almost reverential. But, in his inmost heart, he really disliked Rossini. "Art will gain when the critics are able and dare to tell the whole truth about him", he once wrote. Yet his attitude towards Rossini sometimes strikes one as curiously inconsistent: at one moment he proclaims *The Barber* the finest comic opera in existence; whereas the next he declares it to be wholly lacking in melody. Probably he sensed Rossini's secret hostility. Had not the composer of *Tell* once remarked, when a critic had enthusiastically acclaimed the four suns of Italian music: Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi: "I knew there were occasionally black spots in the sun, but never green ones".

For Bellini he had a peculiar tenderness and admiration, though he readily admitted that his orchestration was threadbare and his workmanship frequently poor. But, to his mind, Bellini was one of the greatest and most individual of melodists. "Think of his melodies", he writes to Bellaigue, "long, long melodies such as nobody before him had ever achieved. And what sublime

thought in the first phrase of the prelude to *Norma*, followed after a few bars by another phrase as beautiful and celestial as anything ever written".

To Donizetti he owed a great debt of gratitude, for it was in the last tragic years of his life that the composer of *Lucia* had assisted his youthful contemporary in a spirit of rare altruism. This may accordingly account for the exceptional leniency with which Verdi judges the less inspired efforts of "the great master, enveloped in his mantle of glory, of which neither time nor men can rob him". Time has, however, stripped Donizetti of much of his glory, but Verdi knew that he was honouring one to whom jealousy and rancour were unknown, and the artist's noble personality cast a certain radiance on his frequently insipid or trivial work.

Yet these composers could scarcely be regarded as contemporaries; they were, after all, forerunners, masters, men who had almost completed their task when Verdi appeared on the scene. It is when he deals with his real contemporaries that Verdi's attitude hardens; it grows more intolerant, certainly less understanding. One is occasionally prompted to wonder whether it was altogether beneficial for him that he was left so exclusively in possession of the Italian operatic field, with scarcely a rival to challenge his supremacy. A remorseless destiny had, indeed, swept aside every possible competitor: Rossini in his prime had laid aside his pen; Bellini had died young, with his work only just begun; Donizetti—most tragic figure of all—had ended insane. Thus his three most gifted Italian rivals had vanished as if by magic, almost as though to make way for a greater than themselves. He alone seemed now to count, for Ponchielli (in spite of his cheap triumph with his bombastic *La Gioconda*) scarcely ever rose above mediocrity. No wonder that Verdi began to grow a trifle dictatorial; no wonder that a touch of arrogance occasionally crept into his judgments of those who might have benefited by his sympathy and advice.

There can be little doubt that of all his contemporaries he admired Wagner the most. It is entirely to his credit that he was not in the least influenced by the obtuse disdain with which the master of Bayreuth occasionally referred to him. Nevertheless, his first impressions of Wagner's music were distinctly unfavourable. In 1865 he heard the *Tannhäuser* Overture at a concert in Paris and summarily dismissed it as "crazy". Six years later, however, in November, 1871, he attended a much-advertised performance of *Lohengrin* at Bologna. He took with him a vocal score in which he commented on the work and its performance. He thought the swan music ugly and (with a real touch of insight) regarded the wedding march as unexpectedly ineffective. He summed up the opera in the following words: "Impression mediocre. Music beautiful, when it is clear and there is thought in it. The action, like the words, moves too slowly. Hence boredom. Beautiful effects of instrumentation. Too many held notes, which makes for heaviness."

On the whole, Verdi was impressed, though by no means overwhelmed. The sluggish action, the lack of variety in a Wagner opera always struck him as definite weaknesses. His attitude on the occasion of the first performance of *Lohengrin* in Italy was, however, full of dignity, all the more so as the

production had been a deliberate challenge to his supremacy. His former friend and now bitter enemy, the star-conductor Angelo Mariani, had produced it—to quote his own grandiloquent words—"in the teeth of the composer who fancies himself the only one in the world, but whom circumstances and common-sense will soon reduce to his proper level". In fact, Verdi generally revealed himself at his greatest when he had been most savagely or unfairly provoked.

There is, moreover, a story narrated by Max Chop that Verdi attended a performance of *Walküre* at the Scala and murmured as he left the theatre: "Such a work makes one feel humble; one wonders whether to go on writing oneself is worth the trouble." This remark, however, scarcely strikes me as authentic; Verdi who, to quote his own words, was "proud as Lucifer", was not in the habit of indulging in such self-depreciation, and we know that he loathed "the uncouth heroes" of the Nibelungen Saga, notably Siegfried.

Nevertheless, his admiration for Wagner was genuine enough. Towards the end of his life he summed up his impressions of his mighty contemporary: "Wagner has a right to be regarded as one of the greatest. His music, though alien to our feelings (with the exception of *Lohengrin*) is music where there is life, blood and nerves; music, therefore, which is entitled to survive. Wagner shows artistic patriotism to an exceptional degree." Artistic patriotism was, however, a virtue which Verdi was inclined perhaps to overrate.

When Wagner died in 1883, Verdi wrote to Ricordi the often-quoted words: "Sad, sad, sad! Wagner is dead. When I read the news yesterday, I was, I must tell you, overcome with grief. Let there be no mistake, a great personality has passed away—a name that will leave a most powerful imprint upon the history of art." It is of interest to note that he had at first written "potente" and had then crossed out the word, replacing it by the superlative "potentissimo".

His attitude to Wagner's greatest contemporary rival Meyerbeer was definitely less appreciative, though he always thought highly of him as a musician and genuinely admired his theatrical acumen. He would have been amazed—and contemptuous—could he have foreseen our present low estimate of Meyerbeer's genius. He had no sympathy whatever with Schumann's wholesale denunciation of Meyerbeer's work—such an attitude struck him as merely silly. To compare Meyerbeer's work to Franconi's circus and to deny him all talent lowered Schumann in his eyes. It was revelatory of the manner in which Germans, as he believed, lost all sense of moderation, every vestige of impartiality when they took exception to anything.

Not that Verdi was by any means blind to Meyerbeer's grave defects: in his correspondence there are occasional caustic comments on his rival's intrigues. "What a pity!" he would remark. "Such genius and yet what a charlatan!" And on another occasion he wrote to Escudier—with reference to Meyerbeer's habit of giving expensive presents to everybody connected with the production of his works—"What a business! Even art becomes a matter of banking and to achieve success one needs to be a millionaire!"

It is, nevertheless, possible that Meyerbeer influenced Verdi in his dramatic

procedure more fundamentally than any other composer, certainly considerably more than Wagner. There is a real affinity of spirit between the Iago of the "Credo" and Bertram in *Robert le Diable*. The dramatic scene of the drawing of the lots in *The Masked Ball* is also obviously inspired by Meyerbeer, as is even the great finale of the third act of *Otello*, in which there is an unexpected touch of artifice. Yet it is in *I Vespi Siciliani* that Meyerbeer's influence is most powerful of all, for here, indeed, Verdi appears to have abdicated all individuality.

What appealed to Verdi in Meyerbeer's music was its genuine dramatic power, as revealed in *Le Prophète* and, above all, in the celebrated fourth act of *Les Huguenots*, which any impartial critic will acknowledge was exceptionally daring for its age. Verdi also admired the at times curiously effective blend of fantasy and realism in *Robert le Diable*.

Another eminent figure inspired Verdi with mixed feelings, though few realized more acutely than he the genius of Berlioz. "I love him as a man and respect him as an artist", he once wrote to Escudier, though one should perhaps take this *cum grano salis*, as Escudier was a personal friend of Berlioz'. At any rate, in the long run, he found it increasingly difficult either to love or respect the great Frenchman. Thirteen years after Berlioz' death he wrote to Count Arrivabene: "Berlioz was a poor, sick fellow, rabid against everyone, bitter and malignant. He had great talent, a keen sensibility and a natural flair for instrumentation. He anticipated many of Wagner's orchestral effects, though the Wagnerians will not admit it. He was without restraint and lacked the calm and balance which produce perfect works of art. He always exaggerated, even when he was doing a praiseworthy thing." On another occasion he wrote caustically: "He was a great artist, but an eccentric; he would have abused his own work if by doing so he could have annoyed someone. He was a real pest to be avoided. Once he had attained fame, largely owing to the vigour of his own powerful talent, he ignored those who had helped him, particularly Meyerbeer, whom he treated with ingratitude." Verdi would have echoed Bernard Shaw's dictum: "The most tragic thing in the world is a man of genius who is not also a man of honour." And, in Verdi's eyes, Berlioz was that tragic thing.

Nevertheless, he was glad of Berlioz' apotheosis many years after his death. "His present triumph in Paris is a well-deserved stroke of justice", he writes, "but reaction is partly responsible for it. He was ill-treated whilst he lived—and now that he is dead 'Hosanna!'" Verdi's profound contempt for the folly and obtuseness of men is once again noticeable; but at the same time a definite lack of enthusiasm for Berlioz himself.

French composers, indeed, interested him little. His correspondence teems with ironical comments at their expense. In his opinion, they foolishly imagined that mere taste could replace spontaneity and creative power. "They make and remake; they seek but never find", is his harsh verdict. No doubt he endeavoured to be polite towards Gounod whose fame was at that time at its height; but, in his heart of hearts, he was not really impressed. Nevertheless, he wrote after *Faust*: "Gounod is a very great musician, the

first master of France [Berlioz, by the way, was still alive] but he has no dramatic fibre. Marvellous and sympathetic music; magnificent details; the word is nearly always well expressed, but not the situation. His characters are not skilfully drawn, and his drama is lacking in atmosphere." In fact, he found Gounod's music extremely skilful from a purely technical point of view, yet fundamentally insipid and undramatic. He felt that *Faust* itself (though a great popular success) had turned into "a small thing" in Gounod's flabby hands. Still at moments he appeared to relent. After *Romeo and Juliet*, instead of being, as one might have expected, less lenient, he was, indeed, more appreciative. For he wrote: "He is always at his best when an intimate effect is to be achieved—then he is most personal. He is a fine orchestrator; in short, a great musician." Realizing his own imperfections in this respect, he was always secretly impressed by fine orchestration.

It is a curious fact that Verdi almost completely ignored Bizet. One is almost tempted to believe that some of the French composer's less discerning remarks at his expense may have reached his ears, perhaps the harsh: "Verdi's is a fine artistic talent ruined by negligence and cheap success". But then it was one of Verdi's noblest characteristics that he so rarely allowed a private grievance to warp his judgment. Nevertheless, towards the contemporary who perhaps stood closest of all to him he certainly took up the somewhat derogatory attitude that Beethoven had adopted towards Mozart and *Don Giovanni*. He appears to have considered Bizet lacking in idealism, and even *Carmen* left him unmoved, for he dismissed it with the terse phrase: "I do not like the type of woman who betrays her lover". One can almost hear Beethoven growling over the triviality of Mozart's themes. But then fundamentally Beethoven and Verdi had much in common: above all, the same austere moral attitude to life and to art, as well as an exceptionally strong tendency to idealize women. One can quite easily imagine Verdi saying: "Fancy choosing a wanton as the heroine of an opera!" He may have forgotten his own *Traviata*, but then had he not purged Violetta of all sin and grossness, until she lingers in our memories almost as a saint and a martyr, no trace of her distasteful profession remaining.

Nevertheless, Bizet was one of Verdi's few contemporaries who really fulfilled all his artistic requirements, whose work abounded in the striking contrasts he deemed necessary in opera. Here surely was one who was enamoured of "light and joy", who did not deliberately "ignore the sun", as Verdi so frequently accused his contemporaries of doing. "It is curious", remarks Mr. Ferruccio Bonavia in his authoritative biography of the great composer, "that Verdi should have missed so much in *Carmen* as to prefer Thomas to Bizet". In fact, it is more than curious; it is disconcerting, for it reveals that strange perversity that prompts a man to ignore the very thing for which he has been ceaselessly clamouring the moment it is offered to him. It, moreover, indicates a definite lack of critical sense as well as of impartiality. For Thomas (though at times a charming composer) has no permanent significance; it is revealing that nobody has ever bothered to write his biography. Verdi, however, was undeniably interested in this amiable, easy-going

opportunist, with whom he had so little in common, yet whose very appearance somehow suggests a weak replica of himself. He found the lengthy Prelude of *Francesca di Rimini* (Thomas' last and feeblest work) "very beautiful", and any thought of tackling *Hamlet* was dispelled by Thomas' inadequate work on that theme. Notwithstanding, he considered the libretto a positive insult to Shakespeare. "Poor Shakespeare, how they have mutilated him! What have they done with the great and original character of Hamlet? Where is that strange and sublime atmosphere, which one breathes when one reads the English tragedy. It gave me the impression of a comic opera meant to be taken seriously. Thomas must be really talented if he can manage to win success with a libretto which is a complete failure, both in its general construction and in its details."

It is, however, when dealing with Verdi's attitude to Massenet that one is somewhat taken aback by what one might be tempted to term a certain pettiness in the great composer's nature. It is of course understandable that so severe a judge should not have thought highly of the composer of *Manon*. He refers rather contemptuously to the "sweet" (or should we say "sweetish"?) Massenet, a typical Frenchman, all mannerisms and no substance. But when Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore* (his first really characteristic opera) was given in 1878 at the Scala, with a success that must surely have surprised no less than delighted the composer of that amiably voluptuous work, Verdi's violent reaction amazes us. The world-renowned creator of *Aïda* displaying acute resentment at the warm reception accorded to a foreign artist of some distinction is surely no edifying spectacle. Obviously he found it unendurable that a foreign composer so much inferior to himself should be extravagantly acclaimed at the very theatre where he had so frequently been slighted.

"If my *Don Carlos* does not make money", he writes in a tone of outraged dignity to the conductor Franco Faccio, "by all means replace it by *Le Roi de Lahore*, a talented work, of topical interest, not human, but very suitable in this epoch of so-called 'verismo', in which nothing is true, an almost fool-proof opera, all the more so as the composer has an amiable disposition, is malleable, and will win the sympathy of everybody. A foreigner! hospitality! the usual artistic banquet! In former times this was unnecessary; now it is indispensable! And, indeed, if I were an impresario (and here Verdi becomes savagely satirical) I should beware of engaging an artist who could not induce you to offer him a banquet, who called a spade a spade and who had backbone. How horrible the times are!"

Even more bitter is a letter he wrote to his friend Clarina Maffei: "All this fuss about an opera, all this praise and adulation makes me think of a time when we presented our works to the public without advertising them, almost without knowing anybody, and, if we were applauded, we said 'thank you' or perhaps nothing at all. I don't know if this was more beautiful; it was certainly more dignified. A journal proposes to affix a tablet to the Scala with this inscription: 'In the year 1879 a foreign master came here and was enthusiastically feted. A banquet was given in his honour, at which the mayor and the town councillors were present. In 1872 a certain Verdi came

in person to produce *Aida*, and he was not even offered a glass of water." On yet another occasion he remarked acridly: "Nobody even said to me: 'Dog, I thank you'. Stupid criticism, and even more stupid eulogies! Perhaps some new insult accusing me of succumbing to Wagnerian influences!"

Strange that Verdi should have failed to realize that his own outbursts were somewhat lacking in dignity, and that even the tactful Faccio had to exercise considerable restraint in order to answer him calmly and in a conciliatory tone. Had he forgotten that he himself had emphatically declared before the performance of *Aida*: "I do not want any advertising. No, no, for God's sake, no fuss à la *Lohengrin*. I would rather pitch *Aida* into the fire!" And when—in strict accordance with his wishes—there was no fuss at all, what bitterness! Sad that the greatest of all triumphs can not render the heart of even a noble artist insensible to the pangs of jealousy!

Nevertheless, it is only fair to admit that Massenet's success must have been disconcerting. Verdi's attitude reminds one a little of Browning's at a reception in honour of the American poet Lowell. A friend caught sight of the great writer pacing furiously up and down, growling: "What a fuss about a mediocrity! Nobody has ever bothered to make such a fuss about me, the greatest living poet of England!" Perhaps both Browning and Verdi overlooked the fact that an artist is occasionally welcomed not so much for his own sake as for that of the country which he—more or less worthily—represents.

The real secret of Massenet's triumph was that he provided the Italians with something they were already beginning to miss. The fundamental austerity of Verdi did not altogether satisfy them; they demanded more sweetness, more charm. And of these qualities Massenet did not stint them; he presented them with a premonition of Puccini before that gifted successor of Verdi had even begun to write. I remember once being astounded at the suggestion of Puccini in Massenet's early overture *Phèdre*, written in 1874, ten years before Puccini's first opera *Le Villi* was produced. Massenet's triumph in Italy during the twenty somewhat barren years before the coming of Puccini satisfied a veritable need. He and Bizet (whose success, as we have already seen, Verdi equally resented) remain perhaps the only two French dramatic composers who have been genuinely, no less than permanently, popular in Italy, a country where there has always been considerable jealousy of French competition, particularly in the sphere of opera.

Years later Verdi's attitude to the composer of *Manon* underwent a slight change. "I have seen the sweet Massenet", he writes amiably, if in semi-jocular tone, in November, 1894. But even though he had grown more friendly towards Massenet personally, his music was always repugnant to him, despite his admiration for the Frenchman's craftsmanship. Above all, he detested Massenet's so-called Biblical works. The thought of John the Baptist making love to Salome was repugnant to him—here again one notices a touch of that austere morality that had prompted him to condemn *Carmen*. On the other hand, he reveals a strange predilection for Massenet's Austrian rival Karl Goldmark and his sultry *Queen of Sheba*. "That is the kind of opera we require

nowadays", he admiringly remarks. Personally, I have always felt that there was little to choose between Goldmark's work and Massenet's *Hérodiade*: both being equally unreal and fundamentally conventional.

Towards the end of Verdi's life there was a great deal of discussion in the Press as to who would eventually be his successor. Boito was ruled out; he was too hopelessly unproductive. Verdi's impressions of him, however, are interesting. He had begun by underrating him; he had even made fun of what is undeniably Boito's finest musical achievement: the "Prologue in Heaven" of *Mefistofele*. "I had heard the Prologue was a stroke of genius", he remarks, "but it seems to me to be discord pure and simple, and I certainly did not fancy myself for one instant in heaven. Boito strives to be original, but he generally succeeds in being merely odd. Above all, he lacks spontaneity and he lacks also the motive". (It is strange how he and Bizet use the same peculiar expressions which are somewhat difficult to explain; Bizet is fond of telling his mother that in order to attain a popular success a composer must possess "the motif". Both composers probably meant some striking, telling phrase that would remain embedded in the memory.)

Yet subsequently Verdi tended to overrate Boito. It is with bated breath that he speaks of *Nerone*—"the work I dare not name". But even he in the end realized that Boito was making little or no headway with his "masterpiece". It was of him that he was probably thinking when he wrote: "Too much reflection drowns inspiration"; and again, more emphatically: "In art the predominance of the reflective tendency is a sign of decadence". He appreciated, nevertheless, the historical importance of Boito's work and the extent of his influence. "You, Boito", he once exclaimed, "take the steps of an ant and leave the footprints of a rhinoceros".

Fundamentally it was a barren period for Italian music; there were perhaps at that time, apart from Verdi himself, only two operatic composers of exceptional musical gifts: Giacomo Puccini and Alfredo Catalani. Verdi was lukewarm about the former and definitely hostile to the latter. Boito, however, a man of remarkable vision and a real friend and admirer of both Puccini and Catalani, succeeded in interesting the aged composer in Puccini's first opera: *Le Villi*. Yet Verdi's attitude was never entirely sympathetic, and here again we encounter a lack of insight that chills one, though it is only fair to acknowledge that he did make a determined effort to be impartial. He remarks about *Le Villi*: "Puccini follows modern tendencies, which is natural, but he remains attached to melody which is neither modern nor ancient. It appears to me that in him the symphonic element predominates—I do not condemn this. But one has to be wary in this respect. Opera is opera and symphony is symphony, and I do not believe that in an opera it is desirable to introduce scraps of symphony just for the fun of letting the orchestra have a fling." (He would no doubt have approved of the final scene of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*.)

It is significant that Verdi disliked orchestrating his own operas; there is here almost a suggestion of an inferiority complex, and this may partly account for his extravagant over-estimate of Gounod's skill as an orchestrator.

In fact, his mingled distrust and awe of composers whom he may have feared, or imagined, were better equipped in this respect than himself, is occasionally a trifle comic. He never uttered a more characteristic remark than: "I should be glad to hear a badly orchestrated opera, if only it contained some great phrase—heroic, sculptural or even jovial". How well this utterance applies to so many of his own early operas! Threadbare, though effective orchestration, but superb, moving, unforgettable phrases; what Bizet termed "wonderful bursts of passion". Here, indeed, is that irresistible "motive", which Boito—despite his superb intelligence—so obviously lacked.

Yet it is to his credit that, overcoming his instinctive repugnance, he used his influence to ensure the production of Puccini's second (and perhaps least satisfactory) opera: *Edgar*, though it is clear that he continued to resent what he somewhat naively regarded as Puccini's tendency to allow the orchestra to dominate the vocal part. Anyhow he does not appear to have followed his career with more than a half-hearted interest.

His attitude to Catalani was even less sympathetic. Catalani, fundamentally delicate and sensitive, is still highly esteemed in Italy, though he has made few converts elsewhere. Quite recently, when Victor de Sabata ventured to perform in London the exquisite little Prelude to Act III of *La Wally*, an influential critic dismissed it contemptuously as "a slender night study".

Nevertheless, Catalani was, with the possible exception of Boito, the most poetically-minded of Verdi's Italian contemporaries. Professor Donald Grout in his informative and discerning *A Short History of Opera* does him full justice. "Catalani's melodies are refined and musical", he writes, "nearly always free of exaggerated pathos, supported by interesting and original harmony, in a varied texture and with excellent balance of interest between voice and orchestra. Unfortunately, Catalani appeared just at a time when the Italian public was being seduced by Mascagni and Leoncavallo, so that his reserved and aristocratic music was drowned by the bellow of realism".

Catalani, indeed, occupies a unique position in the Italian music of the latter half of the nineteenth century. He had much in common with Bellini: the same elegiac sweetness, but considerably greater poignancy. At times he may have lacked vitality and dramatic tension; his characters are certainly scarcely sufficiently differentiated, but how earthy and sentimental do even the finest of Puccini's airs seem beside his ethereal "Ebben? ne andrò lontana" in the first act of *La Wally*. Despite its lack of sustained inspiration, one is tempted to rank this opera second only to the masterpieces of Verdi's old age. No one has championed Catalani's cause more ardently than Toscanini, and though he did not achieve as much as he had hoped or expected, he undeniably drew attention to a rare and unjustifiably neglected musician, rescuing him from oblivion, at least as far as his own country was concerned. Puccini, particularly in *Manon Lescaut* (his first really significant work), owed him a great deal, for Catalani anticipated several of his most characteristic devices.

It is exasperating to be compelled to record that the composer of *La Wally*—typically Italian though he was—was considered dangerously Wagnerian in his tendencies. It was of him that Verdi remarked: "Another step—and we

shall be completely Germanized!" Verdi appears to have been convinced that he was seeking to destroy the traditional character of Italian opera. He accused Catalani of imitating Wagner, and the young composer's first important opera, *Dejanice*, does at moments faintly suggest an Italianized *Lohengrin*. (It is significant that *Dejanice* was first produced in 1883, a year in which Verdi completely disappeared from the repertoire of the Scala—a state of affairs which the aged composer deeply resented.)

There was, however, little to warrant Verdi's hostility. Yet it has been frequently asserted—and no denial has been forthcoming—that Verdi used his powerful influence (no doubt with the highest motives) to dissuade his friend, the publisher Ricordi, from presenting his young rival's works at the Scala. As Catalani's struggle to wrest recognition from an indifferent public was an exceptionally grim one (Toscanini, in particular, has alluded most movingly to it) Verdi's help would have been invaluable to him. Years later, when Catalani died at the age of thirty-nine, unsuccessful, disheartened, a victim to tuberculosis, Verdi wrote: "Poor, poor Catalani! Splendid man! Excellent musician! What a pity! What a disgrace! What a reproach for everybody else!"

Dyneley Hussey, in his biography of Verdi, appears to be surprised at Verdi's unexpected grief at the passing of one whom he terms "a mere acquaintance" of no particular significance. Mr. Hussey obviously does not realize that Catalani had occupied Verdi's thoughts for a considerable period and that he was certainly no mere casual acquaintance. Here is no conventional expression of regret such as Verdi had forwarded to Ambroise Thomas on the occasion of the death of Delibes (to whom he was almost completely indifferent) but a deeply personal utterance. Did Verdi, when he heard of the young composer's premature death, feel a twinge of conscience at his own lack of sympathy and understanding? But possibly, in his inmost heart, with all the rude vigour and creative fecundity of his sturdy peasant stock, he could not entirely overcome an instinctive aversion to the delicate, perhaps fundamentally undramatic art of Catalani. It was, indeed, that rare composer's misfortune to be born in the unimaginative, unenterprising operatic Italy of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Yet one must do Verdi the justice to admit that he was genuinely troubled. He was convinced that the ablest Italian composers were voluntarily abandoning the highest traditions of their art. To imitate the Germans (*i.e.* Wagner) and to exchange their birthright of song for a mess of German orchestration seemed to him the height of folly no less than treason to Italian music. Composers who were doing violence to their own sentiments and thus deliberately cutting themselves off from the very roots of their inspiration were no longer true patriots. Even his beloved Boito he had for a time suspected of such deplorable practices, but the younger composer's unceasing devotion to his cause had ended by mollifying him. The others, however, aroused in him the keenest resentment. "We, the sons of Palestrina, once had a great art", he wrote, gloomily, to Hans von Bülow. "But now it has become bastardized and is threatening to fall into ruins!" Italian musicians, he declared, were

sinking to the level of parasites of a foreign art that was alien to their healthiest instincts. "If we imitate Wagner", he exclaims, "we commit a musical crime and produce works that are futile, not to say harmful". The worst of all defects, he believed, was lack of sincerity; it could only lead to artificiality and conventionality, and from there what was it but a step to sheer artistic nullity?

His bitterness was of course understandable, yet it was hardly justified. In his fears and suspicions he was at times almost as unreasonable as the obtuse Parisian critics who had ferociously denounced Bizet's charming and melodious little opera *Djamilah* as "wilfully surpassing the worst atrocities of Herr Wagner". It is regrettable to have to admit that a composer of such integrity and genius as Verdi should have had—shall we say?—a bee in his bonnet with regard to foreign influences and unpatriotic Italian composers. But the facts are there to prove it. To discover dangerous Wagnerian tendencies in Puccini or Catalani was surely a scarcely credible example of critical fatuity. His own *Otello* was quite as "Wagnerian" (!) as Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* or Catalani's *La Wally*.

As a matter of fact, Wagner never did constitute a real menace to Italian music. His influence, though considerable (and, to a certain extent, dangerous) both in England and in France (we think of the collapse of Chabrier) was relatively negligible in Italy. To have turned this slight and—at least as far as Verdi's own country was concerned—by no means detrimental influence into a nightmare was singularly undiscerning. Besides, the orchestra, nearly always the weak spot in Italian opera, needed enriching and refining, in order to establish a more harmonious balance between the two essential elements. This balance was achieved in his final works with almost miraculous skill by Verdi himself—so why should he have criticized so harshly the attempts of his younger contemporaries to obtain a somewhat similar result?

The real danger—which Verdi at that time scarcely perceived—was not slavish imitation, but growing inertia. The Italian operatic genius—which had reached its glorious culmination in his own *Otello* and *Falstaff*—was threatening to dry up at its very source. It consequently needed all the encouragement and support that its greatest representative could render it. Superficially the 'nineties seemed a period of feverish activity, and yet much of this energy was spurious. It resembled a straw-fire that would soon be burnt out—and then what would remain? It is significant that Italian operatic music did, in fact, peter out, at least as far as the world was concerned, a quarter of a century later, after Puccini's death.

What Verdi also failed to realize was that the orchestral (or as he would have termed it: German) element in a composer such as Puccini was from the outset subordinated to the vocal (or Italian) element. No twentieth-century composer was less disposed than Puccini to allow his orchestra to predominate. Only in *Turandot*, more than twenty years after Verdi's death, did he perhaps, though only to a limited extent, alter his policy; yet even here the orchestra is no more than an equal partner in the drama. As for Catalani, the extremely mild infusion of German romanticism only served to heighten the charm of his typically Italian art.

The most obvious explanation of Verdi's strange attitude is that Wagner was the first foreigner to challenge the supremacy of the Italians in a field which they had previously regarded as peculiarly their own, for Mozart had never succeeded in making much headway in Italy. This sudden, unexpected challenge, accompanied by a phenomenal success that gradually embraced the whole of Europe, caused Verdi to lose his habitual calm and detachment. The slight danger to Italian art was consequently magnified into a dire threat.

Only two of his Italian contemporaries did Verdi never accuse of being lacking in artistic patriotism: Mascagni and Marchetti. They at least had never allowed themselves to succumb to German influences, for they remained essentially Italian. But why waste words on Marchetti, whose works are now completely—and deservedly—forgotten? Verdi's enthusiastic appreciation of his feeblest opera: *Don Giovanni d'Austria* makes us, however, once again wonder at his occasional lack of discernment. To ignore *Carmen* and *La Wally* and praise Marchetti cannot but strike us as singularly obtuse.

Verdi's admiration for Mascagni is surely more understandable. Crude and vulgar though the composer of *Cavalleria* frequently is, he has, in fact, considerably more in common with Verdi than either Puccini or Catalani. And Verdi himself appears to have realized this instinctively. True, there is the well-known story that when Boito first played *Cavalleria* to the aged composer, the latter interrupted him after ten minutes with the contemptuous remark: "Enough, dear friend, enough! I have already understood." What was this, he may have thought at the time, but a crude imitation of *Carmen*, an opera which had never appealed to him and which had already won too many admirers. Was there then to be a French danger no less than a German? Critics, however, have attributed too much importance to this first impression. Subsequently Verdi changed his mind and summed up *Cavalleria* as a work of remarkable spontaneity and sincerity. After all, the heroine of the new opera was a devoted and suffering woman, far more akin to his own Violetta than to the wanton Carmen!

Indeed, it is incontestable that he followed Mascagni's career with more interest than that of any of his younger contemporaries. He was genuinely impressed by Mascagni's fourth and possibly most imaginative work: *Guglielmo Ratcliff* and commented: "The music of this opera is profoundly felt, richly coloured, throbbing with passion and inspiration." It is interesting to note that Puccini was also of the opinion that *Ratcliff* was Mascagni's masterpiece and remarked to a friend: "A fine work. He really has made progress." As a matter of fact, *Ratcliff*—in spite of a weak last act—is considerably more subtle and enjoyable than the somewhat blatant *Cavalleria*.

Of course—when judging Verdi's attitude—it is well to remember that at this time Mascagni was almost unanimously acclaimed as Verdi's successor by the whole Italian Press. It is a trifle amusing to note how anxious even Verdi and Boito became when in 1894 the composer of *Cavalleria* truculently announced that, if Boito did not hurry up with his *Nerone*, he himself would tackle the subject. (He, in fact, carried out his project eighteen years after Boito's death.)

Towards the end of his life Verdi was obviously on extremely friendly terms with Mascagni. On one occasion he asked him whether he was really thinking of composing a *King Lear*. "If that is the case", he added, "I happen to possess a tremendous quantity of material for this monumental subject, and I should be happy to hand it over to you in order to facilitate a most difficult task".

Mascagni was moved. "Why did you not compose *King Lear* yourself?" he ventured to ask. Verdi closed his eyes for an instant and then murmured in an almost inaudible whisper: "The scene where King Lear is alone, face to face with the forest, terrified me". Mascagni modestly, if somewhat uncharacteristically, remarks: "If this titan of the drama in music was terrified, how could I undertake so great a work?"

It was only in his later years that Verdi began to sense the real danger to Italian music. "Good operas have been rare at all times", he declares, "now they have become virtually impossible. Why? Because too much music is being written; because there is too much striving after effect, because obscurity, not light, has become the aim of the artist. Because we are striving to create the grandiose and the inflated—not the great, and from the grandiose emerges the petty and the baroque". His views became increasingly gloomy: "We Italians have abdicated all individuality and committed suicide; the Germans are at the end of their tether; as for the French, they have never been great creative artists." Russian opera he imagined was non-existent, for he shared the preposterous opinion of Richard Strauss that "there never was any genius in any Russian opera." Perhaps England, he exclaimed hopefully, on hearing of the continental success of poor Goring-Thomas' innocuous *Esmeralda*, might provide the great operatic composers of the future. "How fine it would be", he commented, "if the English, who have never been musical, would now take the lead!"

It would be unfair to Verdi not to acknowledge that he frequently recognized true talent when he encountered it, but it would be equally futile to deny that his treatment of his contemporaries was occasionally lacking in insight and understanding and that it contrasts unfavourably with the attitude of Rossini or Donizetti, who were both men of keener vision and more tolerant minds. Indeed, the greater the composer the more he appears to resent any claims on his time as far as the work of others is concerned; his own tremendous task seems to monopolize his entire energy. When it is a question of judging his contemporaries, a man of superb creative gifts is consequently often more obtuse than the average undiscerning critic or mediocre composer. Verdi fully realized this, for had he not once remarked contemptuously: "Think of the views expressed by Weber, Schumann or Mendelssohn concerning Rossini, Meyerbeer and others, and then tell me whether there is any reason to take a composer's opinion seriously." Unfortunately, in certain respects, he himself was no exception to this rule.

The Fugal Technique of Béla Bartók

BY

ROBIN HAWTHORNE

IN two spheres Béla Bartók is recognized to be of outstanding importance. He was master of the art of formal construction, and master of the art of counterpoint. Questions of form appear to have occupied his mind increasingly, giving rise to many formal experiments during the nineteen-twenties and -thirties, and to works of assured formal mastery towards the end. Counterpoint, too, was a matter of the foremost importance to him, and throughout his large output of music we find counterpoint in all its forms, linear, chordal, and what may be called rhythmic counterpoint, in which two or more independent rhythms are set against each other simultaneously. It is not surprising that a composer whose work shows so great a preoccupation with matters of formal construction and counterpoint should find fugue a rewarding medium in which to express his ideas. At the present time fugue is being widely used as a formal framework: one may remember in this connection the work of Vaughan Williams, Holst, Walton, Rubbra, Tippett and Britten, to mention English names alone. Hindemith's recent *Ludus Tonalis* is significant of the present tendency towards the fugal way of thinking. This was Bartók's way from early days. From the first string Quartet of 1908 to the posthumous third piano Concerto we find his thought falling into fugal forms, whether he was writing for solo violin, piano, string quartet or orchestra. It is inevitable that any discussion of fugal technique should be carried out in the light of J. S. Bach's fugues, but the line of thought to be suggested here is that Bartók carries on the tradition of Beethoven rather than that of Bach. An attempt will be made to indicate the divergent conceptions of fugue held by these two masters, and by examination of some of Bartók's fugues to place him with reference to them.

In Bach's fugal technique the subject is frequently answered tonally (see *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, in which fifteen answers are tonal, nine real) and in some instances the counter-subject is found to vary tonally with its subject (see *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, Nos. 12 and 21). In those tonal fugues of Bach in which the counter-subject proper begins after the first few notes of the subject, since it is chiefly these first few notes that are affected by a tonal answer, the counter-subject remains unaltered (see *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 16). The tonal alteration of subject and counter-subject have their *raison d'être*, as the name suggests, in the question of tonality. If the subject at its first statement emphasizes the dominant, or inclines to modulate to the dominant, a real answer will tend towards the supertonic, causing tonal dislocation at the outset, and Bach habitually overcomes this by altering the

subject so as to bring it back to the tonic for the third entry. This procedure is made necessary by the fact that the subject is in a definite key or mode, with a strong feeling of tonic and dominant. If, however, the tonality of the fugue is such that tonic and dominant are not so clearly defined, as is sometimes the case in Bartók's fugues, one cannot properly speak of any alteration of the actual notes of the subject as tonal alteration. Alteration of the subject in this case becomes rather an organic growth of the initial idea, designed not to lead back to the original form of the subject, but away from it. This principle is to be found in *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 21, in which fugue the first counter-subject is different at almost each of its appearances, in bars 5, 9, 22, 26, and 35. The subject itself varies in a manner which cannot be called tonal. The alteration of the counter-subject cannot simply be explained by its varying relative pitch to the subject. It seems more like an organic growth of the original idea in the mind of the composer. To illustrate the distinction between tonal alteration of a subject and its alteration by organic growth, comparison may be made between the fugue in the last movement of Bartók's fifth string Quartet, and that in the last movement of his third piano Concerto. In the Quartet the tonality of the fugue is very indefinite, as is emphasized by the short passage of plain tonic-dominant harmony, *Allegretto con indifferenza*, which occurs soon after it. The fugue subject, developing the opening theme of the first movement, varies considerably throughout its appearances, but there is no sense of tonal answer because there is little sense of key in the first place. The alteration of the subject is here an organic growth. The first entry of the subject is as follows:



The second entry (note that it is a diminished fifth higher):



The sixth entry:



In the fugue from the third piano Concerto, however, the tonality is a clear C sharp minor, and the initial dominant-tonic leap in the subject is answered tonally by a tonic-dominant leap. The fourth entry of the subject, made

by the violas, is similarly tonal. The engaging subject and its answer are as follows:

Ex. 4

In the Concerto for Orchestra there is again a more distinct tonality in the subject of the fugue during the last movement than in the fugue of the fifth Quartet. The key centre is B, emphasized by the opening notes of the subject:

Ex. 5

The answer is tonal:

Ex. 6

In the exposition of this fugue we may observe the two principles in simultaneous use. The tonality is sufficiently definite to allow a tonal answer, and at the same time that answer grows organically. The B natural, held for three-and-a-half bars by the second violins, becomes an F sharp held for two-and-a-half bars by the first violins. The cello entry holds the B for one-and-a-half bars, besides curtailing the second phrase of the subject. The viola entry holds the F sharp for half-a-bar only. It is as if the sense of urgency in the argument increases with each entry. The difference between the first and fourth entries is considerable.

Vln. II

Ex. 7

By the time stretti are reached the subject has developed still further:



The essential features of the idea are the same, but the idea has grown up. It started in an expansive mood, but soon becomes terse, the subject being represented at later entries merely by the pith of its various phrases. It can hardly be said that Bartók derives this principle of organic growth from Bach's fugue already cited (*Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 21), for the growth of the subject in that fugue is an isolated example in Bach's work, a hint of things to come which he himself never followed up. In these fugues of Bartók the method is nearer to that of Sibelius' method of symphonic development, but even this is not an exact parallel, for whereas Sibelius in his fourth and fifth symphonies presents a germ and expands it, Bartók takes an expansive subject and whittles away its redundancies until the root of the matter is reached. In both cases it is a spontaneous growth; but fugue, being concerned with argument and not with drama, has to reduce the argument to its simplest terms, and this is what Bartók does. It may be argued, with reference to the fugue in his fifth Quartet, that it is only the repeated notes at the beginning of the subject which undergo the metamorphosis, and that these are not really part of the subject at all; that they do no more than assert the "spin" of the music, fulfilling the same function as the upward sweeps at the transition from the Introduction to the *Allegro* in the first movement of Beethoven's fourth Symphony; that with these repeated notes the music is merely getting into its stride for the real stuff of the subject; and that as the fugue develops, the need for this preliminary canter is no longer felt, and the repeated notes are accordingly abbreviated increasingly with each entry. The same argument might apply to the long B's and F sharps in the fugue of the third piano Concerto. But it will not do. Repeated notes of this type occur also in the fugue of the third Quartet, and are perhaps a characteristic of Bartók's subjects. In the third and fifth quartets they play an important part in the structure of the music; the repeated semiquavers of the third Quartet and the repeated quavers of the fifth might almost be regarded as themes, or *motifs*. When these quavers and semiquavers appear in the fugue subjects, it is rather as if Bartók says, "You see by the quavers (or semiquavers) where the subject has its origin; now that I have made that clear, forget its origin and see where it is leading us", and the repeated notes gradually drop out as being redundant. But at the first statement of the subject they are an integral part of it, and no mere device for setting the pace, and the change which they undergo is a real growth away from the initial idea into new territories.

Bach attached some importance to a regular counter-subject, and achieved great richness of effect by combining the counter-subject in double counterpoint with the subject at varying relative pitches. In *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I,

fourteen fugues have a regular counter-subject and no stretti, three have stretti and no regular counter-subjects, and six have both counter-subject and stretti. No. 5 in D major can hardly be said to have either. Of the nineteen fugues with a counter-subject, all are in double counterpoint, with the possible exception of No. 17 in A flat, whose counter-subject seldom appears in full. In the stretto fugues Bach necessarily lays less emphasis upon the counter-subject. Bartók's fugues, being mostly stretto fugues, show little concern with the subtle variations of harmonic flavour implicit in double counterpoint and regular counter-subjects. The fugue in the third piano Concerto has no counter-subject; the counterpoint accompanying the second entry of the subject is repeated when the strings make their entry, but this alone hardly classes it as a counter-subject, and it never reappears. The fugue in the fifth Quartet starts with what sounds like a counter-subject, and at the third entry it reappears in regular fashion, but it does not appear again. In the fugue of the third Quartet the counter-subject (or second subject if it is regarded as a double fugue) appears throughout the exposition, is developed through the episode, and disappears when the stretti begin. The fugue in the Concerto for Orchestra has no regular counter-subject at all. That in the Sonata for two pianos and percussion is very irregular in many respects. The upward leap of a sixth with which the subject begins appears in the entries of the four voices as D-B flat, A-F, E-C, and B natural-G, thus emphasizing the supertonic dislocation which Bach avoided by means of tonal answers. After the exposition there are few entries of the subject; two voices state the subject in inversion, but in a very abbreviated form. Later there is something that begins like a four-part stretto, but it does not get very far. Apart from the exposition, the fugue is mainly composed of fragmentary developments of the initial rising sixth. The counter-subject is regular during the exposition, but never reappears. From this brief analysis it will be seen that a regular counter-subject has not the important function in Bartók's fugues that it has in Bach's, and Bartók's practice is rather that of Bach in his stretto fugues, *i.e.* allowing the counter-subject to appear during the exposition alone.

Double counterpoint demands that a counter-subject shall have a well-marked rhythmic character to distinguish it from its subject. Bartók's counter-subjects in the fugues quoted have hardly sufficient independence of their subjects to be of importance in their own right. The counter-subject in the fugue from the Sonata for two pianos and percussion is of the kind used by Bach in *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. 1 in G minor, and Bk. 2 in D major, in both of which it arises out of the subject and is virtually indistinguishable from it. Bartók's counter-subject in the third Quartet fugue shows more independence of character, but it clings to its subject closely.

Ex. 9

The counter-subject of the fifth Quartet fugue has more independence of melodic character, but again nothing comes of it.

Ex.10

In this subject the points of greatest rhythmic stress are marked with an asterisk. One feels that Bach, in writing a counterpoint to a subject of this design, would have stressed it at the points at which the subject had least movement, that is, between the second and third asterisks, and between the third and fourth. This would have given the counter-subject an independent rhythmic character of its own. It is no criticism of Bartók to indicate that in the first six bars the points at which the subject has most movement coincide with those at which the counter-subject has most movement; they move and pause together. We may be certain that this fugal passage as it stands in the movement is precisely what Bartók wanted; he had no intention of making it longer or shorter, and to give the counter-subject too independent a character would require greater length of development than he wanted. But the fact remains that the counter-subject is too closely allied to its subject rhythmically to allow its extended use in double counterpoint. It could not carry the weight of argument, as it stands, in a fully developed fugue. Bartók's use of counter-subject and double counterpoint was limited by the use to which he put his fugal writing within the framework of a larger movement. To suggest from this that he was unable to manage counter-subjects in double or triple counterpoint would be presumptuous; the contention is that in point of fact he did not do so. All the evidence, especially that of the six string quartets, shows Bartók to have been a master of the art of writing counterpoint. In these fugues he limited his powers of contrapuntal ingenuity in accordance with the requirements of his music.

In parenthesis, the fact that the Bartók fugues cited are comparatively brief episodes within a larger whole does not in itself preclude the possibility of contrapuntal ingenuity, double counterpoint, and so on. Both Bach and Beethoven show instances of brief fugal passages within a larger design which are in double or triple counterpoint; for example, Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, 1st movement, at bar 78 there is the exposition of a triple fugue. Beethoven, *Symphony No. 3, Adagio assai*, just after the return to the minor, twenty-odd bars of double fugue; piano Sonata Op. III, *Allegro con brio*, a passage of development which gives the impression of being the

exposition of a double fugue for about ten bars, although it is very irregular in fugal procedure. These three passages of double and triple counterpoint fulfil the same function within their respective works as is fulfilled by the Bartók fugues under consideration. The need for conciseness of thought and brevity of utterance which is imposed upon the composer at such a point is perhaps the reason for the concentration of subject and counter-subject into a single statement of double-fugal nature.

Bartók has been said to be one of the few contemporary composers who show a truly Beethovenish muscularity of thought. The central position of his string quartets in his list of compositions also suggests Beethoven, as Mr. Seiber has indicated in his useful analysis of Bartók's quartets. To confine ourselves to the fugal practice of Beethoven and Bartók, passages of *fugato* occur not infrequently in Beethoven's music, and in his third period become fully-developed fugues rather than brief passages of *fugato*, as in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, the A flat Op. 110, the *Grosse Fuge* in its original setting in the Op. 130 Quartet, and the C sharp minor, Op. 131. In certain respects these fugues differ widely from Bach's. Two points may be noted; first, the comparative rarity of full entries of the subject,* and consequent upon this, the prevalence of long episodes, often of a sequential nature; and secondly, the tendency of the subjects to be wayward and sequential rather than epigrammatic, e.g. *Hammerklavier* fugue and *Grosse Fuge*. Compare also the subject of the Op. 131 fugue in C sharp minor, with that of Bach's *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 4, in the same key. The former is noticeably less terse in its second phrase, inviting sequential treatment, which it subsequently receives.

BACH, *Wohltemp. Klav.* Bk. I, No. 4

Ex. 11

Beethoven's conception of fugue is altogether looser than Bach's, in the matter of construction, entry of the subject, organization of key, and arrangement of episodes. Even when Bach is comparatively loose in his fugal procedure, as in the last movement of *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 4, the effect is more terse and tightly woven than, for example, in the *Hammerklavier* fugue, whose reach is tremendous, embracing new ideas and fresh starts in far-distant keys. Where Bach regarded the subject as a thread running through the whole texture, Beethoven regarded it as a starting-point for far-reaching episodic developments, an idea that has to be re-introduced from time to time as new starting-points are required. Frequently he finds it is sufficient merely to

* Compare Beethoven, Opus 131, first movement, approximately 120 bars of $\frac{4}{4}$ time; after exposition there are only five full entries, including stretti; Bach, *Wohl. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 4, a fugue of equal grandeur and approximately the same length, 115 bars of $\frac{4}{4}$ time, has twenty-two full entries after the exposition. Beethoven, Opus 110, fugue of approximately 150 bars of $\frac{6}{8}$ time (both sections included), seventeen full entries after exposition; Bach, *Wohl. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 19, a fugue of only 54 bars of $\frac{6}{8}$ time, has twelve full entries after the exposition.

suggest the subject by its opening phrase alone in order to give rise to the new line of thought. In short, Beethoven adds an element of drama, more germane to Sonata-form, to Bach's conception of fugue. It is as if Shakespeare had taken the theme of a Socratic discourse and dramatized it.

Where does Bartók stand in relation to these two conceptions of fugue? In the matter of the scarcity of full entries of the subject, to which attention has been drawn in connection with Beethoven's fugues, Bartók has little in common with Beethoven. Only in one fugue, that from the Sonata for two pianos and percussion, does the looseness of the construction suggest Beethoven. This fugue is composed largely of big, wayward episodes, and the subject, on the rare occasions when it appears, does so in so abbreviated a form as hardly even to merit being called an instance of organic growth of idea. It gives the impression that its introduction into the texture is designed merely to give rise to further developments of its persistent crochet-quaver figuration. In the type of subject which he favours, Bartók has more in common with Beethoven than with Bach. It has already been argued that his subjects start in an expansive way. The likeness of the fugue in the first movement of the first Quartet to that in the first movement of Beethoven's Opus 131 has been pointed out by more than one critic. The subjects of the fugues from the Concerto for Orchestra, the fifth Quartet, and the Sonata for two pianos and percussion have Beethoven's way of beginning with big gestures and relapsing into long running figures. The difficulty of building stretti upon such subjects is overcome frequently by using the opening phrase of the subject alone. In the Concerto for Orchestra, twice there occurs a stretto which, if it carried the subject to its conclusion, would be an astonishing *tour de force*. The subject is presented in augmented form, in its natural form, diminished, and doubly diminished, in close stretto, but it is only the first phrase of the subject which is so treated. The close stretti in the third Quartet fugue do not always allow the subject to run its course. This practice, although found in Bach (e.g. *Wohltemp. Klav.*, Bk. I, No. 24) is more characteristic of Beethoven, and is consequent upon the type of subject employed.

Perhaps most Beethovenish of all is the way in which Bartók has enlarged the idea of fugue. It has been suggested that Bartók's fugue subjects tend to grow organically after their first appearance. Bartók has in this detail left the development of fugal form a stage further on than he found it. Beethoven carried forward fugal technique from what it was when Bach left it, enlarging the whole conception of fugue as was necessary if it was to find a place within the framework of his later compositions. To be in place in the *Hammerklavier* Sonata or the Opus 130 Quartet, fugue had to be emancipated from its vocal associations. Beethoven brought the form up to date. That is what Bartók has done. Organic growth of material, as opposed to the dividing of material into its constituent elements, is a recognized symphonic procedure of the twentieth century, and Bartók has brought fugue into line with this procedure. It was by exploiting this method of thematic development that Sibelius breathed new life into the Symphony; it is by showing that the same principle can apply to fugal construction that Bartók has hinted at a new lease of life

for fugue. In a sense, fugue has always been a form involving organic growth; the simplest and most primitive fugues had to grow from exposition to coda, or they were no fugues. But to this Bartók has added the possibility of the metamorphosis of the subject itself, rather than the presentation of the same subject in new lights. Bartók was always looking forward, never content to live placidly upon musical tradition, and in fugal technique he has opened up new possibilities, showing that fugue is no medium merely for schoolroom exercises, but is still a living musical form.

*Richard Strauss**

(1864-1949)

Transfiguration before Death he knew,
The Metamorphoses of laboured years
Above the consummated hates and fears
Of an equivocal relentless crew
Withholding from mankind compassion's dew;
Unscathed his art among degenerate seers,
Kin to Euripides', Molière's, Shakespeare's,
Because from human temperaments it drew.

When Cavalier with rose offends the mode,
When both Dons and Salome go forgot,
When Symphony Domestic seems a slave,
When Life Heroic contravenes world-code,
When Ariadne and Electra rot,
Tyl Owlglass plays his pranks beyond the grave.

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN.

* A critical article by Egon Wellesz on the music of Richard Strauss will appear in the next issue of this journal [ED.].

Kyla Greenbaum and the Psychology of the Modern Artist

BY

HANS KELLER

THE crisis of modern life and art, whether it manifests itself in the atom bomb or in Kyla Greenbaum, arises from man's lack of realistic responsibility, and from his inability to catch up with the techniques he creates. I say realistic responsibility, for while we molest each other, ourselves, and others' as well as our own artistic creations and interpretations with the enthusiastic support of what, subjectively, seems a conscience of the first water, our moral satisfactions depend on the degree of trouble we have taken to achieve something rather than on the objective value of the achievement. The story is not new, but it has never been more true, for with the disappearance of fairly universal ideals (*e.g.* religious ones, no matter whether these are right or wrong) and the inevitable suspicion which the contemporary showroom of the most modern moral models arouses, we are apt to work as hard and as brilliantly as possible in order to attain the only aim left to our bewildered psyche, namely, to hide our aimlessness behind the illusory aim to which we desperately promote every possible sort of means. Now the value of hard work is in any case liable to be over-estimated even by the healthiest of idlers. We satisfy, that is, our primitive punitive and self-punitive tendencies by making others and ourselves work. Add to this that many sources of (self-)punitive satisfaction, such as physical pain, are not nowadays what they used to be, and we readily understand why the moralization of labour is spreading epidemically. To-day, in point of fact, the only difference between work and play is that we work harder at playing than at working, in order to divest play of its immorality.

Small wonder, then, that in this age of infantile man trying to create an adult society, and to make up for his lack of intra-psychic integration by solemnly building up a world of integrated pain, the product of mental activities which is ontogenetically most closely related to love and play, namely art, shows likewise a terrifically intense moralization of heavy labour. Hence our all too exclusive concern with craftsmanship, hence our modern moral picture of the artist as, above all, a hard worker, a picture whose obsessively enthusiastic emphasis on the uninspirational aspect of art makes it neo- rather than classical. Needless to add, the modern work-compulsion readily plays into the hands of the reaction against the Romantic Artist who writes out his stuff under the shadow of Inspiration. From the triumphant relish with which Mozart's ". . . è vero il frutto di una lunga, e laboriosa fatica . . ." is quoted nowadays one would infer that everything he wrote with less effort must fall far below the standard of the "Haydn" quartets. The less effort, moreover, an artist has to make, the more highly will he himself

regard whatever efforts he does make, and the more will he tend to overestimate, as Britten apparently does or did, the contribution of hard and regular work to his art. The very fact that work plays such an important rôle in art makes it easily possible to magnify its importance, for it is only the exaggeration of something unimportant that will readily show up. With the ever-growing interest in work, technique, workmanship, practice, the art of improvisation is speedily dying out, Boris Ord of Cambridge apart, and except on the jazz level. A serious loss, this, not only for creativity, but also for interpretation, for without the power of spontaneous creation, spontaneous re-creation has a more difficult life, and without the power of spontaneous re-creation no performance can be alive. But then the old *Zeitgeist* looks after the public, too, so that nobody notices the difference. Indeed, the unimaginative faith in mechanical reproduction is reaching pathological proportions, whether it manifests itself in worship for the gramophone record or for Toscanini, both of whom always play the same thing in exactly the same manner. I am fully aware that Toscanini's readings are by far the greatest of their kind; it is their kind I am worried about, signifying as it does the decline of *Phantasie*. Instead of an imaginative intellect being able to tackle a figured bass, an empty though highly diligent intelligence busies itself with figured fingerings—not, to be sure, the player's own, but those of an "editor". Thus a piece of music has to pass through two heads, such as they are, until it arrives at the listener. More and more the importance of the musician's own individuality, of his natural musicianship and taste is pushed into the background, for since personality and originality and talent are not to be arrived at by hard work (however hard some people try), our guilt-laden consciences ask for severer satisfactions. It is true that most of the orchestral music one hears nowadays is under-rehearsed, but then irresponsible music-making must predominate in an age in which there are immeasurably more music-makers than musicians—a state of affairs which could not have come about without the great general advances in instrumental technique, which in their turn would not have been possible without the disproportionate, in fact, neurotic attention we have been devoting to drill. Nine-tenths of the non-orchestral music one hears played by responsible and capable musicians is indeed over-practised and over-rehearsed, such as the Beethoven cycle of Menuhin and Kentner at last year's Edinburgh Festival. It is my considered opinion that healthy and natural musicians of these two artists' technical accomplishment and experience should not have needed more than two rehearsals for each sonata, an opinion that has not been formed and considered in the armchair. Menuhin's interpretations, in which you can always detect the influence of a parent figure, a (not necessarily actual) teacher, also illustrate splendidly the modern artist's unquenchable thirst for the supposedly healing, actually chilling waters that spring from the fountains of other people's inspirations. Our age's combined need for ideals, for relief of guilt, for exercise, invests the figure of the educator with ever more towering significance. Not only is the first, and as such idiotic, question an unknown musician is asked, "Whose pupil were you?", but what in a previous era would have been

an adult musical interpreter is seen and, alas, heard wandering round from teacher to teacher, "learning a lot" from everybody except from the composers he is interpreting, and passing on this salad, with nothing but an overdose of pepper as his own contribution, to the listener who, having been similarly conditioned, tries to find in it the revelation he is incapable of receiving.

And what has all this to do with Kyla Greenbaum? Her playing shows more symptoms of what at the outset I have called the crisis of modern life than that of many a more renowned and less gifted musician. So gifted, indeed, is she that she could resolve the crisis more easily than many artists in whom it is less acute. It is for this very reason, namely, that her—at bottom—extraordinarily natural musicianship could doubtless catch up with her technique, could transform what still is often an excellent pupil's conscience into the realistic, aesthetic standards of an artist, that I have chosen her piano recital at the Wigmore Hall on 24th April of this year (the only time I have heard her) for this article's point of departure and arrival. Showing the contemporary malady at, artistically, its best, her interpretations are the most irritating imaginable. She holds out a promise which she takes no steps either to break or to fulfil. The first movement of Mozart's K.333, in particular, showed what a mess a potentially fine artist can make of a perfectly straightforward piece, if she works hard enough at it. Almost throughout you heard, on the one hand, the instinctively tasteful and feeling musician, and on the other hand, the conscientious practiser who had lost touch with what should be the source of all conscientious thinking-out and practice, *i.e.* spontaneous musicality. The result was that almost everything was just wrong. Almost everything—for the end of the movement, as distinct from the exposition's corresponding codetta, was perfectly shaped, with that natural "taste and feeling" that used to excite Mozart's admiration. That it was at the very end of the movement that Kyla Greenbaum found herself is, I think, highly significant. The heavy task of giving an integrated rendering of the movement was virtually over, the burden of all the well-thought-out, artificial misphrasings, the victory over all the self-created difficulties belonged to the past, and there remained nothing but to let the musical mind speak for itself. To remember her interpretation of the movement in the light of what she achieved at its end was, for me, to realize the torture to-day's talent inflicts upon itself. The second and third movements brought new illusory problems which, by their nature, remained unsolved. A particularly ridiculous example of artificiality occurred in the last movement, at the end of the theme's restatement and at the later, corresponding junctures: not the kind of artificiality which manifests itself in unorganic rubato but, on the contrary, the less obtrusive kind that results in a forced adherence to strict time. Nobody but (*a*) a complete fool, or (*b*) one who has thought too much about too little, could continue the upbeat phrase after the *forte* statement of the theme in the strictest time, letting the quaver follow exactly one quaver's time after the B flat in the bass, if not indeed sooner. Probably Miss Greenbaum's mind, instead of concerning itself with the music, reacted with this sham-ascetic phrasing against the Romantic Rubato. Reactions, however, don't make a musical performance.

Her feeling intelligence could have told Miss Greenbaum that the *forte* of the theme's second statement must not be allowed to swallow up the *subito piano* of the succeeding upbeat phrase, and that, while the latter introduces something excitingly new yet growing out of the already known, the link between the "past" and the "future" is strengthened rather than severed by an imperceptible *Luftpause* which excites our expectation for what is to follow. As it was, the listener had not time to expect anything after the end of the theme. To give an expected surprise, however, is the secret of all artistic development, creative or interpretive. Miss Greenbaum needs, not a teacher, but a private listener, preferably not a pianist, who would encourage her to direct her conscience towards musical reality: towards her own musicianship. I should be prepared to bet that I would change her rendition of this Sonata into a first-rate interpretation, merely by listening a few times to her playing it, and by throwing in a word here and there. In the above instance, I should just say: "First (*p*) statement of theme: *quasi solo*. Second (*f*) statement: *quasi tutti*. Continuation: *quasi solo*." A few bars later in her performance, in the conjunct triplets, another prime fault of Miss Greenbaum's playing was manifest, *i.e.* the same, musically unmotivated turn to the quicker, as "effortless" as it was unfeeling, that had already panicked the listener in the passage work of the first movement. There are triplets and triplets. Nobody (or perhaps everybody except Reginald Kell) would take the first triplet in the *adagio* variation of K.581's finale as a strict triplet, but the point about the present triplets is that they *are* triplets, *i.e.* that they both relate to and contrast with the triadic *non legato* triplets at the end of the theme's second statement. The contrast is given by these conclusive, cadential *non legato* triads on the one hand, and, on the other, by the *legato* scale sequences, as they urge further afield, to the realms of the dominant. The unity underlying this contrast of structural context and function must be brought out by playing the respective triplet passages in exactly identical time. Now with a musical person, easily the chief determinant of such unmusical changes of tempo as Miss Greenbaum indulged in is over-practice. He is a very mature musician who does not run the risk, through endless practice of the same piece, of ceasing to feel through every phrase, and to feel every phrase through its context. The risk is, incidentally, all the greater in passages where technical difficulties have been brilliantly surmounted by continuous practice, for in that case the performer's satisfaction at being able to play the thing without a jolt, at its flowing like oil, may make him unaware that he plays it away. Not even Solomon is free from such dangers, though one hears that he sees them.

Miss Greenbaum's performance of Beethoven's Opus 109 offered again the sorry picture of a fight between an intense musicality and a more efficacious, unmusical musicianship. Once again Miss Greenbaum showed, not lack, but workmanlike repression of imagination, a fear of her fancy being too fanciful. She insulted what is, perhaps, music's greatest original genius (and hence, to-day, the least-understood classic) by not depending upon her own originality and spontaneity. If she could free herself of our time's technical and pseudo-musical obsessions, if she ceased to project her musical morality on

to the outside world, on to how Mr. X. or Mr. Y. or the *Zeitgeist* "does it", she could develop a strongly individual, independent, and intrinsically musical conscience. But if she and the other few potential musicians who inhabit our musical world will not listen to the argument of this article, we shall end in a state of affairs of which Goethe's Faust, with his usual foresight, said,

Du hast wohl recht, ich finde nicht die Spur
Von einem Geist, und alles ist Dressur.

Faust, it will be remembered, is remarking upon the poodle, i.e. Mephistopheles. What, to be sure, is Mephistophelean about *Dressur* is that being rarely spiritless, it pretends to be spiritual.

Review of Music

AN ITALIAN "POCKET SYMPHONY"

A. Francesco Lavagnino. "Pocket Symphony" for Strings. ("Augusta", Edizioni Musicali, Torino.)

It is a pleasant duty to record the increasing predilection for instrumental music among younger Italian composers. All too long have "the sons of Palestrina" (as Verdi calls them in a famous letter, dealing with their intrinsic difference from the "sons of Bach", the Teutons) striven to work out their musical salvation through the vocal medium only. Creative interest remains focused on opera throughout Puccini's generation as much as in the epoch of Rossini. But Alfredo Casella's music quite definitely shifts the centre of gravitation from opera to symphony and chamber music. Now the youngest generation of Italian composers—matured during the years of war and its aftermath—frequently chooses purely instrumental lines, a phenomenon unheard of in the history of Italian music since the far off days of Corelli. To the names of Ghedini and Petrassi should now be added Francesco Lavagnino. This young and technically well equipped musician (who only recently published a recommendable little treatise on modulations: *Schema fisso per le Modulazioni*, "Augusta", Torino, 1947) comes from Gavi and has just completed a very colourful Symphony "Le Cronache", which shows that the young Italians have certainly absorbed their Stravinsky and Bartók and are also able to transform their stylistic achievements into something distinctly Mediterranean. His recently published "Pocket Symphony" is on a far more modest scale. It obviously took heart from certain neo-classical works of Casella, but its ideological starting point is undoubtedly Prokofiev's *Symphonie Classique*. Its three well constructed movements work more with "thematic cells" than with long subjects (as the composer himself explains in an amusing self-analysis, printed on the inside cover) and they certainly succeed (mainly through witty intrusions of unrelated flat keys) in turning a stubborn C major development into a highly diverting affair. The Andante in the orthodox subdominant of F aims—according to the composer's comments—"at that transparent lucidity which Mozart expressed in his chamber music". But this very pleasant movement reminds the reviewer much more of Spohr with its smoothly gliding chromaticisms beneath the glossy surface of an unshakeable F major tonality. The final movement unites scherzo and finale features mainly by virtue of a bustling motoric motif, later on wedded to a lusty march and in the end to the self-assertive C major arpeggio theme, which had started the Symphony and very entertainingly rounds it off. Here at last is a heaven-sent opportunity for the Boyd Neel, Riddick and Jacques string orchestras and their provincial colleagues to give much overworked items like Holst's *St. Paul's Suite* a welcome rest and to substitute for them this charming "Pocket Symphony", which can be managed easily by a good amateur orchestra, provided the first violins are prepared to cope with occasional mild harmonics.

H. F. R.

The Decline of String Tone

BY

EVAN SENIOR

WHEN I came to Britain from Australia, nearly three years ago, it was with the anticipation of enlarging my musical scope, of being able to hear and compare actual performances of orchestras and artists with whose work I had been familiar only by hearsay or from recordings, and of being able to appreciate a flood of music from numerous orchestras at frequent intervals, in place of the comparatively sparsely-spaced orchestral performances to which I had been accustomed.

In Australia, as in Britain, the contemporary cult of the orchestra is at its height. From the conditions of ten or fifteen years ago, when orchestras were slowly evolving in the separate Australian capitals from the Conservatorium orchestras, from so-called "State" orchestras largely maintained by private subscription, and from the nuclei provided by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in most of the capital cities, some notable combinations have now emerged, particularly in Sydney and in Melbourne. The broadcasting authorities' policy of inviting guest conductors from Britain, Europe and America has, in the intervening years, done much to raise the standard of playing. However, I was unsatisfied, and felt that much was to be learned and experienced in Britain.

But the inevitable reaction on any ears trained to the appreciation of sound was, at the beginning, distinctly unfavourable, so much so that when my remarks were printed in Australia's leading music magazine, both my editor and readers felt bound to comment.

"It is difficult to believe that British orchestras are at the low standard you say they are", ran some of the correspondence that came to me. "Over here, we read the comments of British critics, and, in addition, we hear all the recordings which come to us, and none of these are unsatisfactory".

The outstanding fault in almost every British orchestra to-day lies in the string sections. Instead of the pure, singing tone that fiddles, violas and cellos are intended to impart to the texture of orchestral sound, we have, almost exclusively, a harsh unmusical noise with no lift, no sweep. There are exceptions, of course. It would be exaggeration to say that there is no such thing as orchestral string tone in British orchestras. The fact that it sometimes emerges is in itself evidence, to me, that my ear is not at fault, and, in general, that it can be achieved. And if any further evidence were needed, it is provided, at intervals, by the visits of continental orchestras.

A rich and silky wood-wind, mellow horns, and good brass are of little account as supporting media when the basic component of orchestral sound—that of strings—is at fault. Such a lack is not noticeable in recordings, for I have yet to hear even the finest reproducing instrument which can give one, without what the mind must supply from its own experience, what I regard as string tone. Nor do those overseas, judging most British orchestras from recorded performances, realize that what they hear is a synthesis of continual repetitions until the desired quality—and quantity—is transferred to the disc.

The fact remains that, except in a few isolated instances, the strings of British orchestras sound as if they were being played mechanically, without that warm human flow of singing sound which, unless our ears are dulled by continual repetition of bad playing, we expect from this section of the orchestra. There is a roughness of texture, a dead and wooden result.

All attempts at analysis in search of a cause have merely led to the existence of many unrelated facts. Not long after my arrival in this country, I was at a concert during which the leader of a famous London orchestra played solo for a few bars during one work. Listening to his grating tone and careless playing, I thought I had hit on a solution based on the fact that the whole string section took its tonal lead from the first desk. But at

another concert, in which another leader played solo for a few minutes with a perfection of tone that was entrancing, the rest of the string section was as bad as ever.

Lack of sufficient rehearsal—the bugbear of all orchestral music in London and to a lesser extent in the Provinces—also suggested itself as a fundamental cause; but, looking at it logically, there is no reason why the individual player should allow his tone to degenerate simply because he is not able to play one particular programme often enough.

In despair, I talked the matter over with one of London's most distinguished critics. "Of course there's no string tone to-day", he pronounced oracularly. "Now, if you'd been in London twenty years ago and heard . . ." and on that particular hobby-horse he proceeded to variations on the theme of "Those Were the Days" that got me, and the subject under discussion, nowhere at all. Another expert, over the same dinner-table, suggested that there was nobody to-day able to teach correct fiddle-playing, which I can scarcely believe.

String tone in orchestral playing is not a result of any single one of a number of relevant factors. A first violin section composed of the world's finest soloists could not necessarily provide it, and yet it could emerge—and has done so more than once in my own experience—from an agglomeration of far from first-class players. Intonation alone is not sufficient on the part of the individual players, nor is the technical welding of the individuals into a compact whole. In other words, the members of the orchestra cannot alone provide it without a capable and painstaking conductor; nor can a conductor of whatever ability without players who know their work.

But the fact that it is so sadly lacking in this country—and more than ever so in the orchestral playing heard in London—is sufficient evidence that something is wrong somewhere. Sound is coming from orchestras which is not, in the proper sense of the term, orchestral sound. For it to be remedied, conductors and players must collaborate—if, to-day, any conductor and any one orchestra are able to have sufficient time together to collaborate in any way at all. In an age when musical impresarios buy their music as cheaply as possible in order to sell it with a quick turnover to as large an audience of "customers" as possible, is it likely that quality will emerge? When an audience of undiscriminating thousands cheers to the echo, is it likely that the still, small protest of the purist will have any effect on either listeners or players?

Comparison is the only method of educating the musical public to demand a standard of playing comparable with the world's best. But that is not possible when almost every orchestra in the country has allowed itself to sink to an equally low level. Nor could the economics of music in this age allow for continual visits of those continental orchestras which alone can provide, it seems, the necessary standards of comparison.

The remedy lies almost exclusively within the orchestra itself, and within the organisations responsible for it. While moderate performances, rather than high musical standards, remain the aim of concert promoters and conductors, little improvement can be expected. Critics of knowledge and judgment can do much, when not suffering from musical indigestion as much as the orchestras themselves, to prod and nag until something is done. But in the long run, it is the exercise of critical judgment by the players themselves that must tackle the problem at its root—which is in the actual fingers and minds and ears of the fiddlers. They alone can make of themselves, in place of a collection of violinists and violists and cellists, the string section of that audible miracle of tone, precision and texture that we expect from what we call an orchestra.

The Salzburg Festival

BY

GEOFFREY SHARP

7TH-21ST AUGUST

WHEREAS opera contributed most of the glory to last year's Festival, this year's highlights were almost entirely orchestral.

Three events remain in my mind as the most important: Furtwängler's performance of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony on 7th August, Bruno Walter's masterly interpretation of Mozart's G minor (K.550) on 21st and some wonderful playing from the Schneiderhan Quartet on the 13th. The orchestra in both cases was the Vienna Philharmonic.

It is no use losing patience with Bruckner and if we English have not the time to listen to him we may as well realize that the loss is ours. Certainly the Austrians, and their foreign visitors, sat enthralled for eighty minutes while Furtwängler gave the most convincing account of a Bruckner symphony I have ever heard. As I had arrived only the previous day it is possible that the thrill of experiencing first-class orchestral playing contributed something of its own for which Bruckner had no direct responsibility, and it was evident that Furtwängler excelled himself as mediator and advocate; yet there remained above all that indefinable sense of having assisted in however humble a way at the disclosure of a masterpiece. This Eighth Symphony is no less.

Mahler's efforts to achieve the "kolossal" were mere tawdry imitations by comparison, and no-one else, except perhaps Busoni (in his piano Concerto), has made a comparable attempt. This is not to claim, with some of our American friends, that size is all; but, all else being equal, size, well-proportioned, can be impressive. This was. Furtwängler achieved a standard of performance which proved by example that our English orchestras are still only playing at music. He also effectively silenced the prevalent English criticism of his taste for alleged excessive *rubato* and for other effects which the composer is supposed not to have envisaged. I have never heard Furtwängler less conscious of himself, while he achieved a sustained continuity which would have silenced even the most voluble critics of Bruckner's methods. The version played was Furtwängler's own: a synthesis of the Schalk-Löwe and the Urfassung with a substantial cut in the finale.

Walter's Mozart had that perspicacity and human sympathy which can illumine the renewed researches of mature wisdom into the subtleties of art. It also paid a wonderful tribute to the conductor's gift for balance and his ability to achieve *exactly* the creation of his mind's ear. Parts of this Symphony are apt to look better in score than they usually sound in performance. Walter proved that this need not be true. Our English conductors might use their ears a little more carefully and our critics should perhaps blame the acoustics of our concert halls rather less.

There were also good performances of *Das Lied von der Erde* (Walter) with Ferrier* and Patzak, and of Pfitzner's Symphony in C, Op. 46 (Furtwängler). The latter would be a gift to Bétoe as *pastiche de Bruckner*, particularly in its flamboyant but effective opening theme; it is a well-written and carefully constructed piece, but music should arouse feelings other than admiration for the composer's craft.

Herbert von Karajan contributed high-powered performances of Verdi's Requiem (with Zadek, Klose, Roswaenge and Christoff) and Beethoven's *Choral* Symphony (Seefried, Höngen, Ludwig and Christoff). Karajan appears to be fascinated with the principle of precise extrovert accuracy to the note, the dot and the letter. He has enormous ability, the full depths of which as yet remain unplumbed. When the humanist, at present dormant, unseats the orchestral engineer, now rampant, Beethoven, Verdi and other composers of dramatic music will have found a new interpreter commanding

* Though Keller's criticism of her Edinburgh recital (see p. 296) applies in this instance also.

a prominent place in the great tradition of orchestral conductors. But it is foolish to demand or to pretend to hear all this in the work of any man in his early forties. Any knowledgeable technician who is also a disciplinarian of fibre can make something superficially impressive, like an American automobile, out of the *Choral Symphony*. Toscanini used to do just this. Karajan in time may do much more. I hope he will.

Something must now be said about Carl Orff's *Antigonae* which was described as an opera, but was in fact Hölderlin's German version of the famous Greek tragedy with an accompaniment for enormous percussion band. Apart from two or three short lapses in the writing for chorus, the work could be described as strictly a-melodic. Such austerity spread over 150 minutes with no interval for recuperation left your reviewer numbed with boredom and inarticulate with cold fury at such calculated desecration of established operatic principles. The vocal writing indulged in the over-familiar modern experiment of making a tenor sing counter-tenor and went one worse by requiring the principal baritone to sing falsetto. Neher's costumes, Schuh's production and Fricsay's direction of the orchestra combined to give the work every chance of success, but if this is the path along which modern opera has elected to travel there should be no future for it.

The operas given were Gluck's *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Titus* and *Zauberflöte*, *Fidelio* and *Rosenkavalier*. The first of these had been recast from last year and was conducted by Josef Krips who also directed the revival of *Titus*. This late tragic opera of Mozart's proved as undramatic as we had previously been led to believe. But the static drudgery of the first half-hour soon yields to music a little less waxen and some of the concerted numbers are authentic mature Mozart. Patzak played the title part with skill and dignity, but the production could stake no other claim to distinction.

Furtwängler spread *Die Zauberflöte* over three hours playing time, which proved to be rather more than it can reasonably stand. One began by sharing his fascination with the sequence of wonderful sounds, but eventually his leisurely *tempi* seemed to throw the jumbled story into extra-conspicuous relief and what had begun as a remarkable artistic experience faded away gradually into something akin to boredom. Schuh's production must take its share of the blame, though it cannot have been easy to devise a full stage routine that would be interchangeable between the Felsenreitschule and the Festspielhaus according to the state of the weather. Wilma Lipp (Queen of the Night), Irmgard Seefried (Pamina), Karl Schmitt-Walter (Papageno) and Paul Schöffler (Speaker) were the outstanding members of a cast that was in no respect less than competent.

Fidelio was the best of the operas and (excluding *Orfeo* which I did not see) the only one to be given a production of true Festival calibre. Schöffler's portrayal of Don Pizarro would be difficult to improve and, as I never tire of pointing out, a Pizarro really strong both vocally and dramatically is the first essential if the work is to have anything like the effect it should. By contrast Flagstad's *Fidelio* was most disappointing: she was "scooping" horribly, but that was the lesser of two evils; far worse was her absolutely consistent practice of outsinging all her colleagues quite mercilessly in all the concerted numbers. Somebody should have impressed upon her that Beethoven's opera was not contrived as a singing match in the Wagnerian or the Italian sense. Patzak's Florestan and Seefried's Marcellina were all that one could wish, but Hans Braun seemed a little embarrassed as the Minister—almost as if he felt too young for so responsible a post. Furtwängler made several minor alterations of emphasis compared with his interpretation of last year, most of them calculated to heighten the dramatic effect of the whole; and while this "supertensing" technique lent a welcome stiffening to the body of the opera, its application to the third *Leonora* overture invested the piece with a bogus dramatic significance (which in this context it certainly cannot carry) and, in the process, disrupted its musical entity.

Der Rosenkavalier was notable only for the contribution of the Vienna Philharmonic under Georg Szell: with a little more warmth and lyricism this would have been perfection. But the singing was undistinguished and Wallerstein's production, apart from some fine lighting effects in the last act, was efficient rather than imaginative.

The Edinburgh Festival

BY

HANS KELLER

2ND-11TH SEPTEMBER*

If I had my own way, I should write about nothing but Serkin's *Hammerklavier* Sonata. Perhaps it is as well that I haven't, for by dissecting his performance I might fail to impress the reader with what was, after all, by far the most important thing about it, namely, its clear and exhaustive unity. What to many had always seemed a forbidding work, not, if they were honest, easily understandable, developed here as something they always seemed to have needed, always, somehow, somewhere, seemed to have known. The exceptionally ecstatic enthusiasm with which they found themselves forced to greet Serkin's interpretation showed their awareness that, for once, they had been in the presence of what Furtwängler calls "the unknown Beethoven". The importance, at the present juncture in music history, of authentic Beethoven playing cannot be overestimated. If now, in one's desire to make one's applause a little more concrete, attention may be drawn to one or two details, the Adagio's first extensive *ritardando* might serve as a microcosm epitomizing the entire interpretation's macrocosm. The variform, infinitesimal *rubati* within the *ritardando*, that is to say, far from endangering its unity, emerged as its strongest cornerstones. Or perhaps one should reserve this none too delicate metaphor for the elements, such as one might try to isolate, in the powerful rendering of this movement's extensive, penultimate *crescendo*; while no metaphor can possibly do justice to the ensuing *subito piano*. In the last bar, incidentally, no c" reached our ears. Perhaps the general praise of the Usher Hall's acoustics has been exaggerated. The Hall is not bad, yet it has all sorts of minor acoustic defects in all sorts of places.

Together with Busch, Serkin contributed another exemplary performance: that of Reger's C minor Sonata, Op. 139. The charge of dryness that is sometimes brought against Busch loses its point whenever this artist is at one with his composer; and if the overwhelmingly bated breath of the violin's entry in the Adagio of Beethoven's Op. 96 sounded dry to some, they are as insensitive as those who applauded Busch's painful performance in Mozart's B flat Sonata, K.454: only in the slow movement, particularly in the development, did we hear signs of unusual understanding. It is not possible to give a complete description of what was largely a flagrant misinterpretation; such things as the misplaced accents on the dotted semiquavers in the first movement's introduction, and the neglect of the *subito piano* in the last movement's central episode, were symptomatic of an approach among whose most tragic aberrations was the perverse rendering of the second tune in the first movement's second subject. The restrainedly lyrical character of this theme is not only inherent in its own form, but also follows, as a necessary contrast, from the structure of the whole exposition. Busch made nothing of this. There is no greater admirer of what is great in Busch's achievements than I—whence I am relieved to find that Busch is meeting my criticisms with more respect than some of his uncritical admirers.

His phrasing in the Allegretto from Schumann's A minor Sonata might have taught Wolfgang Schneiderhan (who recently recorded the movement) a thing or two, particularly about the structural function of Schumann's accents. His Dvořák Concerto, on the other hand, was lacking in both Dvořák and Busch: nor can one reproach his musical personality for not attaining a deep-reaching identification with Dvořák's.

Ginette Neveu,† a supreme violinist whose mannered executions seldom penetrated

* Previous performances, heard over the radio, are also taken into account.

† The sad news of her death in a flying accident has been received just as this issue goes to press [ED.]

beyond the obvious, seemed out to capture rather than to captivate. People were (justly) shocked by the scant respect paid her by André Chyten and his Orchestre du Conservatoire in the Sibelius Concerto, but hardly noticed that she did not listen to the orchestra either. Nor does she always listen to the composers she plays; in her recital with her brother Jean she lavishly improved upon the texts of Fauré's and Franck's A major sonatas, though she left the Debussy more or less as it stands. Which does not mean that its performance was unobjectionable, for wherever a little phraseological problem presented itself, it was generously overlooked. Thus, in the opening phrase, the crotchet rest was allowed to keep the e' b in utter isolation.

When H. C. Colles wrote in *Grove* that "the vibrato is obtainable to a limited extent on wind instruments", he could hardly have heard the present-day Orchestre du Conservatoire. Much adverse comment has been spent on the curious sounds emitted by their wind; however, if that's the way they cannot help blowing, we have to take it or leave it. In most instances, I decided leave it, particularly where, as in Brahms IV, it plays more than usual havoc with what the composer pictured. At the same time this Symphony seemed to me Walter's most impressive contribution to the Festival, almost entirely consistent in itself. The opening, however—one of the most unfolding openings ever written—was too open: it had already been unfolded in the artist's room. Walter's *Eroica* I did not understand. In my review of Furtwängler's interpretation of Beethoven's First¹ I observed that "among the unique solutions of details was the liberating emphasis placed upon the triplet in bars 52 and 152 of the . . . Andante; because of the preceding *sf*, most conductors don't really know what to do here". Walter definitely does; in fact, different as his total conception is from Furtwängler's, this particular point they both solve almost exactly alike.

Walter's *Kindertotenlieder* (with Ferrier) fell slightly short of my, naturally, extravagant expectations; his and Ferrier's Lieder recital was, alas, his and Ferrier's: she had obviously been coached by him, and was less obviously, but no less firmly conducted by him; nothing could make up for the ensuing lack of spontaneity.

There was some scandalous playing by the Jacques Orchestra, and some scandalous singing by the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, whose closed lips maltreated Bach's "Come, kindly death" à la Hollywood. At the same time the conductor, Sir Hugh Robertson, won back part of our respect with his own choral song, *In Avonmore* (1948). The tune is quite charmingly based on a gapped (hexatonic) scale, omitting the submediant; the flat seventh's mixolydian manoeuvres, however, are unnatural. There were plenty of snaps in *Gretna Green*, a choral dance arranged by Sir Hugh which was rendered most graciously, though nowise truly in matters intonational.

At the (Glyndebourne) Opera, *Un Ballo in Maschera* proved an enjoyable experience. There was no weak member in the cast, though in the performance I attended the strings (Royal Phil.) played badly and, from my seat, sounded worse. Oppenheim conducted with more musicianship than technique. Welitsch was her old, ravishingly artistic self; she came into tune as late as "Morrò, ma prima in grazia", and there the solo cello marred the mother's plea. The musical side of the *Cosi* production has met with unanimous approval. To substantiate my disapproval would take at least 5,000 words. A look at my Edinburgh report of last year² will tell the reader why, space conditions apart, I feel like resigning from the task, and a visit to Sadler's Wells will provide him with far less accomplishment than Glyndebourne has to offer, but with more Mozart.

Bloch's *Concerto Symphonique* is commented upon on another page*; the other novelty I heard at the Festival, Hans Gál's *Concertino* for organ and strings, is a rare example of modern music that is mortal without being deadly. The Düsseldorf Theatre Company's *Faust* secured lasting memories despite its defects which were the same as those of most

¹ This journal, IX/4, November, 1948, p. 302.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 295 ff.

* See page 298.

modern musical performances of great works: a limited approach to the unlimited spiritual range of the whole; a narrow conception of its wide structures; wrong *sforzati*.

At the last press conference we were informed that a record had been achieved in the widespread press and radio "coverage" of the Festival. An elevating thought to take home, more especially if you did not think about it. I had no need to think about it, for I received a practical lesson in what it meant. Next to me in the Press Office on one of the last days sat a most attractive young lady, typing away on her glowing Festival report. The all-too-continuous *espressivo* with which, like Ginette Neveu, she performed upon the instrument bewildered me, until at last I bashfully inquired: "I say, do you know anything about music?" Her reply was as succinct, simple and sincere as that of any competent critic. She said: "Not a sausage".

Concerts

FIRST PERFORMANCES

THEIR PRE- AND REPERCUSSIONS¹

- (1) Britten, *Spring Symphony*; (2) Britten, *Let's Make an Opera*; (3) Britten, *St. Nicolas Cantata*; (4) Richard Arnell, 4th Symphony (C)²; (5) Philip Sainton, *Nadir* (symphonic poem) (C); (6) Benjamin, Viola Concerto (C); (7) Handel-Barbirolli, Concerto for viola and strings (C); (8) Alec Rowley, *An English Suite* for strings (C); (9) William Alwyn, Concerto for oboe, strings and harp (P)³; (10) Alan Bush, Violin Concerto (P); (11) Eugene Goossens, *Phantasy Concerto* for piano and orchestra (P); (12) Bloch, *Concerto Symphonique* for piano and orchestra (E)⁴; (13) Rawsthorne, Concerto for string orchestra (P); (14) Humphrey Searle, *Overture to a Drama* (P); (15) Honegger, Symphony No. 3 (*Liturgique*) (P); (16) George Dyson, *Concerto da Camera* for strings (C); (17) Malipiero, 6th Symphony; (18) Lars-Erik Larsson, *Croquiser*; (19) Gordon Jacob, *Prelude, Passacaglia and Fugue* for violin and viola; (20) Rubbra, *Meditazione sopra "coeurs desolés"* for recorder and harpsichord; (21) Bernard Stevens, *Theme and Variations* for string quartet (C); (22) Prokofiev, *Adagio* for cello and piano; (23) Phyllis Tate, *Songs of Sundry Natures* (six settings of Elizabethan poems) for baritone, flute, clarinet, bassoon, harpsichord; (24) Jean Rivier, *Rhapsodie provençale*; (25) Richard Strauss, *Duet Concertino* for clarinet and bassoon, strings and harpsichord.

HAVING recently written on Britten for one of our weeklies, it is not easy for me to criticize a previous writer on the same composer for the same journal. But I have to remain true to my principle to stop short at nothing, not even at the truth. The truth, then, is that upon the occasion of the *Spring Symphony*'s first performance, and in somewhat more incidental connection with a recorded broadcast of Britten's 2nd Quartet, *The Listener* published an article by Scott Goddard on "Britten as Instrumental Composer". The *Spring Symphony*, the reader may meanwhile have discovered, is vocal throughout, and the relevance of the article can therefore be imagined without difficulty. It did in fact contain two sentences on the work: "The new 'Spring Symphony' . . . sounds as though it may be the kind of work that would call forth the composer's finest style of orchestral

¹ Including first English, London, broadcast performances.

² Cheltenham Festival.

³ Prom.

⁴ Edinburgh Festival.

writing. It is rumoured that as well as the vocal numbers this new Symphony contains a number of purely orchestral movements." Thus was the listening public prepared for the work. What struck Dyneley Hussey about the Symphony was that it was a song-cycle. What struck me was that it wasn't a song-cycle, but that the words (which I did not listen to, anyway) had once again, or rather once anew, stimulated the composer to create an extended, intramusical unity. I shall in due course return to this great work in detail, perhaps in a place more hospitable than the present to observations on this composer. The musicless part of his and Eric Crozier's "Entertainment for Young People", *Let's Make an Opera*, is a bore for the adult listener whose opinion is, however, irrelevant; I seriously suggest that the play of Part I should be reviewed by a child. Not so, to be sure, the "Songs for the Audience" which are rehearsed in it and which form pre-, post- and interludes of Part II, the actual children's opera, *The Little Sweep*. The music of the work (largely sung by children) is so musical that it satisfies both youthful and adult artistic needs. The first London performance of *St. Nicolas* was, for me, an insult to the mighty work. Concert agencies, mind press seats! The best place in the Southwark Cathedral is no joke; the (acoustically) worst, mine on this occasion, certainly is one. The only sounds I could clearly perceive were the twittering of sparrows in the roof and the rumbling of railway trains outside. The piano was out of tune, and chorus and orchestra made no audible attempt to adjust themselves to any of its varied levels of pitch; worst was their insistent sharpness as against the piano's c'''s in No. VIII. The most interesting and problematic figure in the Cheltenham Festival's first week was Arnell; the most, may one say, interdicting, Sainton. The latter's sincerity engenders a degree of sympathy which forbids one to say what one thinks about his work. Arnell's pre-symphonic 4th Symphony would seem to work out quite a bit of what should have been worked out in private, prior to the work. He is trying to say what he will have to say: a potential lot. Benjamin's viola Concerto aroused the, for once, fairly unanimous opinion that it should return to where it came from, i.e. its original form for viola and piano; even the composer was perhaps inclined to agree. The "Viola Concerto" by "Handel-Barbirolli" is unworthy of either name. According to Shawe-Taylor, the Rowley is "beautifully written for the medium". Maybe, but on that level any student with ears can do likewise. The same must be said about Alwyn's, in that sense, "beautiful" oboe Concerto, an unbearably epigonic and formless affair. A far more conscientious, self-respecting, and respectable concerto is Bush's; for that reason alone important for our *Kitsch-laden* times. There may be other reasons, too, but one hearing did not disclose to this reviewer either formal infallibility or continuous inevitability of the combination employed. The value of Bush's contribution can best be measured against the danger of Goossens': forced and badly orchestrated, the *Phantasy Concerto* hides behind a pseudo-contemporary idiom. Bloch's much-despised *Concerto Symphonique* contains one really great moment, i.e. the first movement's coda. Why some of its derivative vulgarities did not irritate, but on the contrary rather captivated me, I have not yet discovered; perhaps it was because whenever Bloch repeats himself or others, he does so with a most naively egotistic and profound conviction of offering a revelation. Also, a master-hand, whatever it does, does not easily get round itself. What did get on my, as distinct from most of my colleagues' nerves were the formal deficiencies of the work; least obvious, and most disturbing, in the second movement, an experiment—slow movement and scherzo rolled into one—to which I had been looking forward with considerable expectations. The scherzo-part, I submit, is too short, and the movement falls to pieces. It was depressing to find that Hubert Foss, the programme-analyst of Rawsthorne's supreme Concerto for string orchestra, should forget the clarinet Quartet in his ontogenetic notes, and that Martin Cooper as well as Scott Goddard should miss personality in the present work. Have they read Mellers' essay on "Alan Rawsthorne and the Baroque" (*Tempo*, 1946; reprinted in the writer's *Studies in Contemporary Music*, 1947)? It contains much more of relevance to the Concerto than anything that has been written on it, leading the listener to the analysable part of the composer's personality as it expresses itself in this lasting and—historically, ontogenetically and internally—logical achievement. The last

movement's fugal section seemed to me far more inspired, and hence far more satisfactory structurally, than that in the violin Concerto. The Searle comes as something of an analeptic after *Gold Coast Customs*; it is in fact interesting, bless the adjective, in spite of its eminent suitability for a congress of contemporary music. The coda is most convincing. There are undeniable banalities in the Honegger, there is even some clumsiness in the scoring (*pace* Albert Hall), but the exceptional point about it is that it had to be written. Hence its reinvigorating effect, hence also the composer's shining through even the most generous mixture of styles. The best movement is doubtless the middle one, "*De profundis clamavi*". Its persistent 3/4 bar accents form the counterpart to the motor rhythms of the outer movements ("*Dies irae*", "*Dona nobis pacem*") and are employed not just for the sake of themselves, but also in order, most movingly, to cease. The tonal structure of the Dyson is neither here nor there, confuting its own partly over-conservative scheme by, on that basis, confusingly abrupt manoeuvres. The composer's own programme note was a model of sham analysis; from now on we must have more patience with lesser writers. The Malipiero, too, suffers from its tonal build, its tonal loyalty, or, as I should say, its inverted tonal snobbery: "Listen what a lot I can do within a narrow tonal frame, hardly ever leaving a key for ages!" He can't. Of Larsson's six piano pieces only five were played. They showed original thought, genuine feeling, and a natural technique. Even where the composer is in an eclectic mood he remains inspired. The slow, fourth movement is least cogent in form; revised (*i.e.* a bit cut and drawn together) it too would make a splendid piece. The *opus* (38) is enthusiastically recommended as a valuable addition to the small good piano literature of our time. A far smaller literature has been enriched by Gordon Jacob's *Prelude, Passacaglia and Fugue* for violin and viola; I came late to this, and came to regret the fact. How big the literature for recorder and harpsichord is I do not know, nor, to be conscientiously frank, do I care, for the recorder drives me mad. If I am thus not a competent critic of the Rubbra, the fact remains that I found myself forced to hear it to the—admittedly nowise belated—end. However, recorder or no recorder, the work is of slight importance, and Dolmetsch, to whom it is dedicated, did not, slips apart, play well. Stevens' first Quartet I only heard in rehearsal. The unity achieved between the eleven variations and the concluding fugue on a new subject was as impressive as the beauty of the slow theme and the slow variations. There are various questions—*e.g.* of the use made of this difficult instrumental combination, as well as of the value of one or two variations—upon which I cannot yet express an opinion. The work will repay detailed study. The "new" Prokofiev (Op. 97; the 5th Symphony is Op. 100), on the other hand, presents no problems. Its advantage is that it is an unextended, higher lowbrow *salon* piece (thus obviously suitable for The People), so that its structural inadequacies create a minimum of disturbance. It is cast in one of the twentieth century's recognized ternary forms, consisting, that is to say, of (A) Invention, (B) Invalid Inlay of Indifferent Ideas, (A) Iteration of Invention. The Tate is highly (*a*) gifted, (*b*) facile, (*c*) immature, and partly (*a*) subtle, (*b*) shallow, (*c*) predictable, (*e*) intramusically arbitrary. A strong exhibitionistic element makes itself felt in the composer's music; if it does not become an end in itself, it will stand her glaringly obvious talent in good stead. Jean Rivier's *Rhapsodie provençale*, which, alas, I could not hear to the end, was specially composed for the Aix-en-Provence Festival. It is a worthy successor to Milhaud's *Suite Française*, with its clean treatment of folk songs, its assured scoring, its clear texture, its cleansing effect. Good film music, this; it appears that French average is rarely below average. In view of his recent death, I have left the Strauss uneasily to the end. "*De mortuis nil nisi bene*", however, is one of the most immoral moralisms ever perpetrated and perpetuated. Let us therefore finish, as we began, with the truth: the Concertino is very promising, in that it will make the newcomer look forward to the works of Strauss' early and middle period.

H. K.

FURTWÄNGLER AND WALTER

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

28TH SEPTEMBER

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Mary Jarred, BBC Men's Chorus, c. Furtwängler	
<i>A Faust Overture</i>	Wagner
<i>Gesang der Geister über den Wassern</i>	Schubert
<i>Alto Rhapsody</i>	Brahms
Overture, <i>Egmont</i>	Beethoven
Symphony No. 7 in A	Beethoven

1ST OCTOBER

BBC Symphony Orchestra, Dora van Doorn, Kathleen Ferrier
BBC Choral Society, c. Walter

Overture, <i>Prometheus</i>	Beethoven
<i>Kindertotenlieder</i>	Mahler
Symphony No. 2 in C minor	Mahler

6TH OCTOBER

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Walter

Overture, <i>Euryanthe</i>	Weber
Symphony in G minor (K.550)	Mozart
Symphony No. 9 in C	Schubert
<i>Blue Danube Waltz</i>	J. Strauss

FROM the point of view of style the last of these concerts was by far the best. The playing came as near perfection as ordinary mortals may and Walter provided yet another proof of his remarkable gift for striking a right balance; even the Albert Hall could not defeat him. This is not to suggest that the Mozart G minor sounded as moving as it had in the Salzburg Festspielhaus six weeks earlier, no-one who has experience of both halls could believe that it would: but by packing his orchestra as closely as possible under the canopy, thus obtaining something of a "point source" effect, Walter was able to counteract the diffusion normally experienced in the Albert, and, in No. 1 loggia at least, the echo was only occasionally objectionable.

Furtwängler's deep understanding of Beethoven I had thought to be generally conceded; but there are still some reporters who persist in hardening their hearts, understand nothing of what they hear, and concede to Furtwängler only eccentricity of deportment. The remarkable feature of the *Egmont* overture was not the admittedly *zehr grosse Pause*, during which one could almost have walked round the hall and resumed one's seat without missing any of the music, but the intensity of the performance. Blindfold, one might have run through one's alphabet of conductors . . . Ansermet, Boult, Cameron, Dobrowen, Enesco, confident that the responsibility was not theirs and equally confident, long before the *zehr grosse Pause*, that it was Furtwängler's. In the last resort, the critic can approve only what he feels himself. Objective appraisal, so-called, can be at best no more than superficial, and the objective principle finds favour with modern critics because it saves them the trouble of thinking musically. What a relief it must be to have complete confidence in one's reading of a printed score, without having to worry what the composer meant or how that might most nearly be achieved. Wagner fared less well. The playing was accurate but tentative, like that of a good orchestra on its mettle but insufficiently familiar with the piece: balance, too, was unsatisfactory, the strings seeming weak and anaemic and climaxes lacking in power. The two items which involved co-operation with English singers are best left without comment.

Why Walter played *Prometheus* and the *Kindertotenlieder* before Mahler's enormous second Symphony, which by itself accounted for ninety minutes, is one of those mysteries of programme-planning which will probably never be solved. Neither was particularly

well played, as if the performers were reserving themselves for the Symphony, which is quite substantial enough to form an exhausting concert by itself: exhausting, that is, to those of us who are less familiar with Mahler's symphonies than we are with Beethoven's. *The Times* critic presumed to describe the first movement as intolerable claptrap; one can but nod in bemused acquiescence at such omniscient, almost instantaneous pigeonholing. I was far less certain. Mahler cannot readily be made to slip into the journalists' prefabricated categories: he is a law unto himself. Whatever one may think of the thematic material, this first movement does form a coherent whole, as Walter emphatically demonstrated, while its scope and dimensions are to a large extent conditioned by the elaborate choral finale which it counterbalances. The second and third movements are much slighter, while the short vocal fourth serves merely as an introduction to the last. The performance was astonishing, with everyone clearly at their most responsive to Walter's authoritative direction. The small blemishes, of which there were a number, did not seem to matter. BBC string tone was notably better than usual. G. N. S.

Opera

LONDON OPERA CLUB

"A Pastoral Divertissement" (to Music by Purcell)
and *Venus and Adonis* (Masque by John Blow)

THE GREAT HALL OF HAMPTON COURT, 8TH SEPTEMBER

THE "Pastoral Divertissement" is no doubt well selected by Professor Lewis—even the keys of the sundry pieces fit—but one cannot quite see the *raison d'être* for this stagey entertainment, since some of the numbers are taken from concerted music, and the rest (from *King Arthur*, *Dioclesian*, etc.) have been performed lately in their proper context by the BBC. Still, there was good singing by Margaret Hyde and Donald Munro, as well as lively string-playing, though the three violins over-pressed in an obvious attempt to fill the hall. In my opinion, Prof. Lewis took the duet "Tell me why" (*Dioclesian*) much too fast. Having sung "Ah, I die if you deceive me", not even a couple of noble shepherds would turn coy and frisky on "Yet I will, I will believe thee". Also too fast was the last part of "Since times are so bad" (*Don Quixote*), and parts of *Venus and Adonis*. On the other hand, I found the popular "I attempt from love's sickness to fly" too slow, and in consequence lackadaisical. Its pace should be set by the fleeting, scale-like *fioriture* (to be sung fast and smoothly) which are Purcell's symbol for flying and fleeing (as, for instance, at the end of the solo-cantata "From rosy bowers").

The great music of *Venus and Adonis* received a commendable if somewhat prettified performance. Miss Shacklock and Mr. Munro had studied their rôles well enough; but their, and also the choir's, ensemble with the orchestra was obviously under-rehearsed. The false relations and the cadential turns and twists of Blow's harmony, so delightfully unexpected for a modern ear, require perfect intonation and timing to sound inevitable. The same goes for Blow's mastery of turning a recitative into an air or duet by gradually tightening the counterpoint. In these critical passages, lapses occurred both in the performance of 8th September and in the next day's broadcast; a word of praise must, at the same time, be given to the harpsichordist, Miss Katharine Thomson, who, together with Prof. Lewis, often saved the situation.

A final word about the place of performance: when old music is not only "interesting" or "charming" but, like Purcell's and Blow's, genuinely great, when, that is, it really speaks to our emotions over the centuries, then a "historical setting" in an antler-studded banqueting-hall, with an orchestra in period-costume, is not conducive to the general public's understanding. An atmosphere fraught with history merely brings out the volatile aroma of a transitory musical idiom while diverting the listener's attention from the timeless values of the music.

P. H.

THE DINKY DOOS AT COVENT GARDEN

29TH SEPTEMBER

THOUGH Mr. Priestley first formed the Dinky Doos about twenty years ago, they sprang from such humble origins that manifestly they could not assault the Covent Garden stage, even in 1949, without some kind of supernatural embroidery to their personalities and the fortification of some music wider in scope and more ambitious in texture than that of Mr. Jollifant. Well, the Dinky Doos have become Displaced Gods and Arthur Bliss has succeeded Inigo: absolutely. From which you may have surmised that *The Olympians* is not grand opera. It isn't; but it has been presented at our National Opera House as if it were.

The story is of the simplest and for the most part undramatic. The displaced gods appear as a group of strolling players, little, if any more prosperous than were the forerunners of *The Good Companions*; under straitened circumstances they are engaged by old Lavatte, a pretentious bore with a lust for gold, to entertain a select party on Midsummer day. The point of the tale is that on this day the gods' powers are temporarily restored, and the entertainment gets rather out of hand. The prospect of Venus, Diana, Mercury, Bacchus, Mars and Jupiter going suddenly berserk after long endurance of all those petty irritations to which small-time entertainers are prone, proved far more enticing than the actuality—a series of prosaic tableaux. There is also a subsidiary, manufactured, love-interest which is resolved, rather spinelessly, in the last act. In fact, after a promising first act, the work loses its grip progressively to the final curtain. Each of the latter obviously has been devised by an experienced man of the theatre, and it is my opinion that Mr. Priestley's libretto deserved better music.

The production gave evidence of greater care than has been usual at the Garden, though it still seems to be nobody's business to ensure the fullest and most effective use of the cyclorama: concertina-creases were more evident on this occasion than last year's habitual dirty streaks, but how pleasant it would be to dispense with both! Murray Dickie and Kenneth Schon were the only singers to distinguish themselves. The orchestra seemed to play better than usual, though I may have been deluded owing to the unfamiliarity of the music.

G. N. S.

The Mozart Fellowship

News has recently reached London from Salzburg that the Mozart Fellowship is now resuming some of its functions and is seeking to reawaken the interest of its old members and to attract new supporters. The Fellowship, which is responsible for the maintenance of Mozart's birthplace, wherein the Mozart Museum is housed, and of the Mozart Archives, has suffered heavy losses in the partial destruction by bombing of Mozart's birthplace, and in the disappearance of a number of treasures belonging to the Museum and the Archives which had been removed from Salzburg to a salt-mine for safety.

Former members of the London branch of the Fellowship, and all others willing to participate in the restoration of its fortunes, either by paying an annual subscription of a few shillings or by making a single contribution of several pounds, are requested to communicate with the new honorary secretary of the London branch: Mrs. Kathleen Dale, Gorse Cottage, Hook Heath, Woking. She will gladly send them a copy (in English) of the circular just issued by headquarters in Salzburg, giving particulars of the Fellowship's constitution, history and rates of subscription, and a descriptive catalogue of the lost treasures which it is hoped may eventually be traced with the assistance of members and repurchased for the Fellowship.

Film Music

BLISS—FRANKEL—LARSSON—BERG

FOUR top composers, two bottom scores. Every bar of Frankel's *Trottie True* could have been written by a lesser man; every bar of Bliss' *Christopher Columbus* should have remained unwritten. How the composer of the H. G. Wells film *Things to Come* (1935) and *Men of Two Worlds* (1946), two scores which have established themselves as film-music classics, could come to write music for this ghastly picture ought to make an interesting paragraph in a biography, preferably an autobiography. There is a limit to the badness of a film which can occasion good music, and which does not paralyse the listener's receptivity to whatever moments of musical interest there may be. Lars-Erik Larsson's contribution to the Swedish film *Iris* was a new experience for me; epigonic rather than epoch-making, yet it does not do our epoch any harm: the past is made to serve, not an open *pastiche* nor a hidden *Kitsch*, but what I should call a perfect piece—the first I have come across—of good (film-)musical journalism. The composer's former teacher, Alban Berg, has written a film-music movement which is the very opposite of journalism, i.e. the lastingly powerful interlude between the first and second scenes of *Lulu*'s second act; the piece was intended to be accompanied by a silent film. Upon the BBC's recent two recorded broadcasts of the opera, Desmond Shawe-Taylor¹ suggested that this "desperate expedient" of Berg's was "one of those wildly unpractical notions which sometimes visit men of genius". Never mind unpracticality as long as a notion has sufficient genius to become eventually practicable. Stimulated by Berg's experiment, I would indeed submit what may seem a yet more far-fetched, but may prove a yet more far-reaching proposition: a film whose sound-track limits itself to dialogue and natural noises, both sparingly used, but which is based on "pre-scored" music actually to be performed during the screening, just as in the "silent days" of the cinema. From a musical point of view, this idea excludes all the disadvantages of both the silent and the sound film, offering, at the same time, either's advantages. Thus the composer could take (and limit) his own time; the music would be free from the celluloid track's sound distortions; and on the most positive side, one could freely venture on such novel structures of dramatic music as the camera's agility and selectivity make possible.²

¹ "Lulu." *New Statesman and Nation*, 27th August, 1949.

² Compare my observations on Walton's *Hamlet* music in MR: IX, 3, p. 197.

Book Reviews

Wagner: The Rhinegold. By Berta Geissmar. Pp. 34. (Covent Garden Operas, Boosey & Hawkes.) 1948. 2s. 6d.

Gespräche über Musik. By Wilhelm Furtwängler. Pp. 139. (Atlantis-Verlag A.G., Zürich, and Humboldt-Verlag, Vienna.) 1948. 18 Schillings.

Musical Uproar in Moscow. By Alexander Werth. Pp. 103. (Turnstile Press.) 1949. 6s.

The *Rhinegold* improves upon the same author's *Valkyrie*,¹ in that the novice reader's innocence is fully taken into account. Thus he is now at last informed about Erda's *personalia*, as indeed about almost everything the book wants him to want to know about—which unfortunately does not include Wagner's *Leitmotiv*-technique. Apart from

¹ See this journal, IX/3, August, 1948, pp. 213 ff.

naming the motifs as they occur at important junctures, the author confines herself to pointing to (without explaining) one of her pet examples "of the way in which Wagner often used the music to anticipate an event not yet revealed by the action". In fact, this is not among the most original aspects of Wagner's Leitmotivations; Mozart had already hit upon the idea,² which indeed would not seem very hard to hit upon. There is, however, only one downright misleading sentence: ". . . from backstage [comes] the sound of anvils on which a solo of eight bars' length is being hammered". This sounds as if the anvils were only busy for eight bars. Theirs are, however, twenty-eight bars; the eight solo bars are the climax of their section. Nor would it have been difficult to distinguish between Wagner's and Geissmar's stage directions; put, for instance, the first paragraph of the book in inverted commas, and the reader will note with interest that all this is a translation of Wagner's own words. As for Dr. Geissmar's style and idiom, they are bad where they're not English, and worse where they wouldn't even be German. Her language never moves forward, but either stands still or creeps backward. The bibliography should have included Wagner's own *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*.

We pass from Dr. Geissmar to her former boss, and from bad English to good German. Dr. Furtwängler's talks were actually, if privately delivered: they are the revised result of informal interviews which the conductor Walter Abendroth, known to us above all by his Pfitzner book,³ had with his great colleague in 1937, at the latter's Potsdam home. The conversations were taken down by Freda v. Rechenberg, Furtwängler's assistant. The seventh and weakest chapter, however, was added in 1947. Significantly enough, this last "talk", on atonality, is the only one where the author contradicts himself, for his criticisms are invalidated by his own pertinent observations on audiences' reactions earlier in the book. Yet even Furtwängler's untruths result from his deep musical insight. I have recently suggested that one of the chief obstacles in the way of our understanding something is our understanding of something else.⁴ It is Furtwängler's comprehension of the full significance of music written in the major-minor system that inhibits his appreciation of Schönberg's method of composing with twelve notes, misleading him, in fact, into sundry suggestions which are plainly wrong. Thus he will assert that in the opinion of the Schönberg group "tonality" has altogether had its day; or that "atonal" music is the first to take "the stuff of music, its notes and harmonies as its starting-point, and not, as hitherto, man as he changes in history", whereas in reality twelve-tone music developed out of the historical changes which Schönberg's *creative*—and only *a posteriori* his theoretical—mind underwent. Truly historical events, to be sure, are always in advance of history; otherwise they could not make it. "The only thing which Wagner, just as his predecessors, deemed important was to find an adequate expression for the world he wanted to embody in his work". That precisely the same motives moved Schönberg towards his discoveries, Furtwängler does not see, for the simple reason that he does not feel it.* It is his emotional vision of music as a whole that is not as wide as it is deep; intellectually he does recognize that there must be "a piece of reality" behind the world of atonality "which you cannot explain away", that the "principle" of atonality "somehow meets modern man's need for expression". How he goes on to explain—again by means of a relatively far-sighted rationalization of his emotional narrowmindedness—what actually modern man has to express, is of secondary importance when compared with the rest of the book, comprising as this does some of the best that has ever been said about music, far too good, in fact, to be understood by those most in need of it. What here unfolds itself (for Furtwängler's thoughts, whether in or on music, are never statically stated, always dynamically developed) is the wholly articulate, because passionately intense and plastically intelligent, musical world-view

² See this journal, IX/4, November, 1948, pp. 297 f., and X/2, May, 1949, p. 162.

³ Hans Pfitzner, Munich, 1935. Cf. *Music-Survey*, II/1, 1949, p. 25.

⁴ "On Musical Understanding", *Music-Survey*, II/1, 1949.

* Furtwängler does not mention that on 2nd December, 1928, he conducted the first performance of Schönberg's *Variations for Orchestra*—a sad reminder, this, for every admirer of Schönberg and of Furtwängler.

(*Weltanschauung*) of a man whose powerful intellect and imagination, despising the "intellectuals", feed on the unfailing inspiration that springs from an exhaustive emotional experiencing (the verb is apter than the noun) of musical forms. As he says, "soul must be form and form must be soul". Translated into English, however, my semitic-teutonic paroxysm means that Furtwängler knows what he is talking about. Whether the reader will, too, is down to him. He certainly won't if he derives his musicianship from bar-to-bar listening, books, cold-blooded studies of scores, passionate perusals of "analytical" notes. For instead of the usual synthetic analyses, Furtwängler has analytical syntheses to offer, not only on music, but on virtually all questions of importance to the musical. Besides, some topics of supreme importance to the unmusical, such as the "literary" content in Beethoven, are searched and exploded. Beethoven is of course the centre of Furtwängler's universe, wherein everything moves centripetally; it is with Beethoven that, again and again and again, he illustrates his ideas. And where they actually come to be about Beethoven, they engender truer reflections on—indeed almost of—the music than conceptual language would have seemed capable of. His explanation of the relation between the structure and the texture of the instrumentally conceived, vocal finale of the Ninth, for instance, should be read by every newcomer to the Symphony, while his discussion of Beethoven's tendency towards simplification might profitably be read by Mr. Antony Hopkins.⁶ On the interpretation of Beethoven, "really the whole Beethoven, not the classically-academically castrated one", Furtwängler has much to say wherefrom most conductors would, if they could, learn what they lack. All pseudo-musicologists, too, should make a point of reading his description of a historically conscientious, technically precise, indeed allegedly "exemplary" performance of the *Matthew Passion* in which, however, Bach "fell under the table". And our whole musical age might heed Furtwängler's penetrating analysis of modern performances which arrives at this summary conclusion: "The fear of sentimentality, the fear of oneself"—the leading thought of a whole generation's music-making! As if music-making were not, on the contrary and necessarily, a confirmation, an affirmation of one's self in the highest degree, *if there is to be any sense in it at all!*"⁷* As for meaning and purpose of rehearsals, both factions of fools, the restless rehearsers and the reckless rough-riders, are put into their place by Furtwängler, i.e. by music:

"The number of rehearsals a conductor needs—given an orchestra of our [the Berlin] Philharmonic rank—depends on the kind of his artistic individuality, i.e. on the one hand, on what he visualizes . . . and on the other hand, on his ability to transfer what he wants on to the orchestral apparatus. Here there are no objective standards. Quite particularly wrong is the current opinion—the more rehearsals, the better. That would be far too simple: for the rehearsal as such is not something isolated; rehearsal and performance belong together and can only be understood and appreciated in their dependence upon one another. There are conductors who, in spite of their great experience, have never grasped what a rehearsal is really for. Then there are those, too, who know how to rehearse well and interestingly, and disappoint in performance. [Scherchen.—H.K.] The rehearsal must, to be sure, fulfil its function as a preparation; that is to say, there must not be more improvisation in the performance than is absolutely necessary. But—and this must be emphasized particularly—not less, either . . . The urge to fix all details down to the smallest *minutiae* originates, in the last resort, from the interpreters' fear of having to give themselves up to the inspiration of the moment. With the help of minute preparations, they try to push such inspiration into the background, and to eventually substitute⁸ it, *make it supererogatory*.⁹ They want to fix the individual effects completely, to compute them, as it were, at the writing-table, to preserve them in spirits. [Toscanini.—H.K.] This is wrong, because one does not thus *give living works their due*.¹⁰ To a far greater extent than is commonly supposed, the great musical masterpieces follow the *law of improvisation*.¹¹*

The *law of improvisation*, a concept which most modern musicians, not to speak of many modern composers, will not even understand, because they have never felt what Furtwängler calls "the logic of the soul" (*seelische Logik*) as it manifests itself, for instance, "in the development, the fate of [Beethoven's] themes", in the "Laws of Becoming

* See this journal, X/2, May, 1949, pp. 132 f.

* Furtwängler's italics.

(Gesetze des Werdens), of the transition from one mood to another", in the "feeling knowledge of which themes, which moods must harmonize with one another in order to result in a new whole", and of "how the different movements have to succeed each other. . . ." Those, naturally, who deem their chance ideas "improvisations", must consider improvisation lawless. The reader may remember that I have previously drawn enthusiastic attention to the rôle of spontaneous inspiration—the pleonasm is necessary nowadays—of the *feeling* for unity in Furtwängler's renderings; I may add here that as far as interpretation is concerned, his *Credo* is indeed largely mine. I think it is necessary for me to make this statement, first of all because a reader should know where he is with his critic, particularly if the critic's standards are not popular, and secondly because my scientific attitude may obscure the primary importance I attach to emotional insight and inspiration—even, I may say, for musicological research. In "Kyla Greenbaum and the Psychology of the Modern Artist",⁶ an article which I drafted before I knew of Furtwängler's book, the subject of artistic technique, too, is inspected from a viewpoint similar to that of Furtwängler when he says:

" . . . For what one naively admired as technique in former times was by no means what one understands by it to-day. It was not the 'technique' of Mozart or Beethoven, or later of Paganini and Liszt, which impressed their contemporaries, but the language of the man *behind** such technique, the language which made technique an inner necessity for its user. It is only since technique has become something that can be separated from the total personality, and which is attainable at any time by purposeful training, that the problems of execution connected with technique have *arisen at all*.^{*} They are not really problems of 'technique', but are to do with that point alone where the technical and the psychical (Seelisches) *meet*.^{*} How far may the technical be developed so as still to remain psychical expression and thus to retain its inner necessity? That is the decisive question."

Nothing but a complete translation—which, one hopes, will be forthcoming—can do justice to this book. Incidentally, it also deals (or rather, it deals incidentally) with art and politics: "Art is not a matter of markets, doctrines, democracy, communism, etc. . . . It does not tell us anything about a nation's politics—which are always politics of the hour (*Tagespolitik*)—but of its eternal essence. It does not tell us of a nation where it hates, but where it loves."

Neither the accusers, nor the accused—e.g. Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturyan, Kabalevsky, Shebalin, and Myaskovsky—in the by now notorious Moscow conference of musicians at the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in January, 1948, would altogether agree with Furtwängler, but then Furtwängler would find it difficult to agree that Soviet art was art. An abridged translation of the *verbatim* report of the conference, and of the ensuing Central Committee's Decree on Music, forms the body of Mr. Werth's—for this reason—highly valuable book, whose rest consists of a conscientious, but musically somewhat embarrassing and even faulty frame to the bewildering picture. A humble attitude behoves us all in matters political. While man has always had the most decided views on the sister ills of society and of sex, the history of mankind is the history of a mess in both respects. Nor have we ever succeeded in smoothing out our political differences by telling ourselves that, after all, we are all in the same boat, for in point of fact we aren't. What we are unwilling to realize is that, above all, we are all on the same unruly sea, the ever-surging ocean of our primal instincts. Both the over-simplicity of our political attitudes, that is to say (not to speak of their inevitable hostility), and the over-complexity of our social problems, originate from psychic activities which proceed at a pretty low level of instinctual organization, where the apparent influence of ratiocination is as great as its actual influence is small. As long as, far from doing something about this state of affairs, we refuse to become aware of it, most political systems are bound to be immeasurably better than their adversaries, and immeasurably worse than their adherents think. With such considerations I tried to cool my, in any case, none too heated head before approaching the present book, and during its perusal

⁶ See pp. 286 ff.

* Furtwängler's italics.

I did my best to find some good. The harvest, I really regret, was small. One does, it is true, learn that "in the past, the Soviet authorities . . . did not allow music critics to write about a new work until they had heard it four times": a policy which might profitably be adopted by ourselves, if only in order to show that some of us hear less at the fourth session than others at the first. One also hears, on the third day of the conference itself, Zhdanov's* naive, but nevertheless quite profound observations on "naturalism": ". . . I must say that a whole number of works by modern composers are so full of naturalistic noises that they remind one . . . of either a dentist's drill or a musical gas-wagon, the kind the Gestapo used. . . ." A few minutes later, he says, ". . . also, you neglect the requirements and the possibilities of the human voice in writing allegedly vocal music. And then there are stunts like using the piano as a percussion instrument. This is not good enough". Turning now from the accuser to the accused, does one not, again, sympathize with Shostakovich when he says, on the first day of the conference:

"The composer must be much more critical towards his own work. And maybe, before publishing his work, or having it performed, he should think hard whether . . . he has really worked on it to the best of his ability. Also, there is too much specialization. It seems to me that the composer should strive not to limit himself to one *genre*".

"I maintain very strongly", said Britten—one of the blackest souls from the Soviet viewpoint—in a broadcast for schools in 1947, "that it is the duty of every young composer to be able to write every kind of music, except bad music". With Shostakovich's first point, however, the western musician can only fully agree at the cost of a (quite easily attainable) misunderstanding. For Shostakovich and we mean different things by self-criticism: while the demands of our consciences are not independent of our society, the demands of his conscience—or rather of one of the conflicting parts of his conscience—are often indistinguishable from those of his society. At the end of the conference, he says:

"In my work I have had many failures, even though, throughout my composer's career, I have always thought of the People . . . of those who reared me; and I always strive that the People should accept my music. I have always listened to criticism. . . . I am listening to criticism now . . . and shall accept critical instructions. . . ."

". . . our three days' discussions will be of the greatest value, especially if we closely study Comrade Zhdanov's speech. . . ."

Richard Capell made an important point some time ago⁷: "Has the mature Shostakovich fulfilled the promise of the 1920s? The critic of the future will pronounce thereupon, and will have a good subject for discussion in the effect upon this lively spirit of the State's guiding hand." It is not, of course, Shostakovich only whose reactions to the—psychologically, not ironically speaking—highly parental reproofs of the state authority merit the closest inspection. Listen to Muradeli, that unfortunate composer whose opera, *The Great Fellowship*, happened to start the present row:

"Comrades, in the name of the Party and the Government, Andrei Alexandrovich [Zhdanov] rightly and sharply criticized my opera. . . . I thought it over very deeply. As a man, as a citizen, and as a Communist, I must say that I agree with what he said." [First day of conference.]

That he might also speak as a composer did not, apparently, occur to him; the Soviet composer pushes the, on the conscious plane, intra-musical part of his conscience towards the unconscious and puts every possible source of moral energy at society's service. Zhdanov would

call it extreme individualism when a composer decides that he himself is the highest and sole judge of his work.

* A. A. Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee and president of the conference, who has meanwhile died.

⁷ Review of *Dmitri Shostakovich: The Man and his Work*, by I. Martynov, *Music and Letters*, XXIX/1, January, 1948, pp. 89 ff.

Khachaturyan: Of course, such things are never said openly.

Zhdanov: Are not such moods criticized?

Khachaturyan: Yes, but rather weakly and half-heartedly. . . . We often do not receive enough guidance. [First day of conference.]

It would be superficial to assume that Khachaturyan or the others are being hypocritical. Quite apart from the fact that, as the report shows, this exchange of views cannot be likened to a corresponding conference under the Nazi regime, apart even from such obvious sincerities as the above-quoted closing words of Muradeli's or also those of Khachaturyan's speech on the first day of the conference, anybody with an elementary idea of social psychology must see that where the full power of the State directs itself against individualistic tendencies and supports popularity, the growing individual artist is likely to suffer from an *endopsychic* and, quite easily, unconscious conflict between society's and his own requirements, all the more so when the State has to offer, not only a good deal of instinctual satisfaction, but also ideals of great ethical appeal. To me it would appear that while our culture is neurotic, theirs is psychotic. We, that is to say, see approximately that (and what) a lot is wrong with us, though we cannot help it; they do not see what is wrong with them, and consequently do not want to help it. For what they do want to help is not what is wrong with them. Thus, at any rate, the matter looks from the (neurotic) outside; if the C.C. want to change our opinion, we shall be pleased to go and see for ourselves. Meanwhile, what it all amounts to seems to have been splendidly and tersely expressed by an anonymous reviewer—who cannot be anybody else but Gerald Abraham—in *The Listener* of 23rd July:

"That now and in the future Soviet composers may write only (a) popular songs, marches and so on; (b) operas and symphonies in which they must try to write like the nineteenth century Russian classics. (If a composer lacking Tchaikovsky's—terribly individualistic—melodic and other gifts fails, despite the most sedulous aping, to achieve anything like Tchaikovsky's popularity with the masses, woe betide him!) This Munnings-like glorification of bourgeois taste is the only comic aspect of a rather tragic affair."

The tragedy of the tragedy is that the inevitable conflict between artist and society is at its most malign when transplanted into the artist's own soul, especially if he does his unconscious best to deny its extent or indeed its existence.

H. K.

Sergei Rachmaninov. By John Culshaw. Pp. 174. (Dobson.) 1949. 8s. 6d.

The language of praise being unfortunately less extensive than that of blame, this must be a short review. It is difficult to see how this book could have been better done. Mr. Culshaw is an admirer of Rachmaninov but very much this side idolatry and when he thinks the composer's work is not up to standard he says so and also gives a reasoned argument for his conclusions. The reviewer has never liked Rachmaninov, but it is evident that a composer with so wide an appeal is not an ineffective composer, though he may be antipathetic, and this study is an excellent consideration and evaluation of the composer's work. Lest this should seem too laudatory let me add that Mr. Culshaw seems slightly lacking in his appreciation of the songs and that I doubt if *Mermaid* is an altogether satisfactory translation of Dargomishky's *Russalka*.

R. G.

The Proms. By Thomas Russell. Pp. 72. (Max Parrish.) 1949. 7s. 6d.

No. 9 in *The World of Music* series is partly a brief history of a typical British institution, partly an *éloge* of Sir Henry Wood, and partly one of the "provocative pamphlets" by the Managing Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra mentioned on the jacket. Only nine pages, diminished by seven black and white illustrations, take us from the era of John Banister and the era of Thomas Britton to that of Newman and Wood. Though there is an excellent coloured plate after Chalon of Jullien conducting, he is dismissed inadequately, and surely something should have been said about August Manns (I can hear the late Dr. Ernest Walker remonstrating in sympathy here), who performed a service to Schumann at the Crystal Palace similar to Wood's to Tchaikovsky at the

Queen's Hall. This work will very soon be dated, and the ridiculously inflated and almost unrecognizable frontispiece of Sir Henry in Doctor's robes (the Hilda Wiener and Flora Lion portraits on pp. 29 and 51 are much better) goes a long way towards dating it. Indeed, in less than a few years a clause like "one has the impression that he saw all the programmes of the fifty years to come at one swift glance in 1895" (p. 16) may well be cited derisively. "Nothing like leather" was the hallmark of the old Proms. How rarely an unfamiliar work by one of its staple composers was performed, Weber's *Turandot* or Mendelssohn's *Melusina* overture for instance! Somewhere I have a letter from Sir Henry Wood explaining that he omitted the third movement of *Sheherazade* because the suite was too long. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Meanwhile one is grateful for the accounts of Robert Newman and the veteran benefactor Dr. Cathcart.

Wagner: The Twilight of the Gods. By Berta Geissmar. Pp. 61. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 1949. 2s. 6d.

If anyone dislikes Wagner (for whatever reason) he will be able to justify that dislike by the sketch, reproduced from *The Mirror of Music*, of the composer in the Albert Hall in 1877 by an English singer, Charles Lyell. It is a face of relentless scheming cleverness without a touch of nobility. This analysis of dreariness is well done, with only eleven musical examples and three stage designs, and the sketch aforesaid tells the reader with the utmost sincerity what he is in for. This is No. 16 of "Covent Garden Operas".

Hinrichsen's Musical Year Book. Vol. VI (1949-50). Pp. 416. (Hinrichsen.) 15s.

This useful and comprehensive guide to the contemporary musical scene contains forty contributions (three of the most salient being on Bernard Shaw as a musical critic, living British composers and music and musicology in the New World) together with the usual features, obituary, etc.

Brief History of Music in Brazil. By L. H. C. de Azevedo (translated by E. M. Tylor and M. de M. Reiss). Pp. 92. (Pan American Union.) 1948. 75 cents.

This is the fourth of a series of monographs each devoted to the present state of music in the twenty-one republics of the western hemisphere. The English translation extends from p. 45 to p. 85. These monographs are an alarming symptom of present-day American totalitarianism as witness this pious aspiration: "It is hoped, on the other hand, that occasionally an author will discern in the music of his particular country the pattern of the general development of culture through the hemisphere". We are told that the Americas "form with Europe" what "we may call the occidental music-community". The present work, in Portuguese and English, contains accounts of sixteen outstanding Brazilian composers from Garcia (1767-1830) to Villa-Lobos ("green and yellow nationalism") and notes on some others, with a bibliography.

Chamber Music. By Homer Ulrich. Pp. xvi + 430. (Columbia University Press: Cumberlege.) 1948. 32s. 6d.

The sub-title is "The growth and practice of an intimate art", and, if not starting *gemino ab ovo*, the author develops his subject from chanson to canzone in sections that are said to be new in a work of this kind, though admittedly owing much to Riemann's *Handbuch, Old Chamber Music*, and the researches of Miss Crocker. He has a penchant for tables and charts, of which there are fourteen, including two "life-spans" of composers, "formal plans" of *Das musikalische Opfer* and *Die Kunst der Fuge* (adapted from Schwebsch), and tabular views of Haydn's string quartets and Mozart's travels. This typical product of modern American scholarship will be invaluable to students for examinations. It does not affect to be profound, though it gives one a headache if more than twenty pages are read at a sitting. The "culture" is honest and laboured, though

the dismissal of Reger in a paragraph that does not even mention the keys of any of his quartets and the complete absence of Weber and Verdi from the survey are not the only times when this Homer nods, for what is one to say of a passage on p. 188 where Rachmaninov is bracketed with Beethoven and Brahms as a major composer and the statement on p. 277 to the effect that the motive theme disappears from the *meno mosso* section of the *Grosse Fuge? Verum opere in longo*, etc., and this is a long work. Mr. Ulrich is to be thanked for stressing certain unobvious particularities, e.g. the development of the second movement of the sonata from the triple metre section of *canzoni*, the dating of the Mozartian chromatic influence on Haydn and its cessation, Beethoven's single movement trio in B flat and op. 121a. Some, but not the reviewer, will commend his interpretation of op. 59 as in effect a *durch Leiden Freude* rumination reaching its climax in the fugue of the third Quartet; it is at least interesting. The book is furnished with index, bibliography, and a list of publications and recordings; in the last Reger and Weber, but not Verdi, are listed.

E. H. W. M.

The Orchestra. By Adam Carse. Introduction by Sir Adrian Boult. Pp. viii + 60. (Parrish.) 1949. 7s. 6d.

Opéra Comique. By Martin Cooper. Pp. viii + 60. (Parrish.) 1949. 7s. 6d.

The art of condensing a whole history into some 60 pages has been admirably practised by both Mr. Carse and Mr. Cooper. The format of these books is most attractive—good paper, clear print and excellent illustrations, but it must be admitted that Mr. Carse is the more fortunate both in his subject and his style.

The orchestra is defined as "this complex and composite instrument", and each chapter unfolds the development of some feature which the audience of to-day takes for granted; and this growth is shown to be due to the interaction of composer, performer and instrument-maker together obeying the artistic need of the age. It is shown as an organic growth and not a planned policy; and, with reference to the value of broadcast performances, we are reminded that "an orchestra is above all a living thing, and not merely a series of vibrations".

Having set limits to his microcosm Mr. Carse is then able to turn it about for our amusement. Unlike the many brief yet tedious documents of modern knowledge, this book is both charming and erudite.

Mr. Cooper has provided us with a comprehensive survey of French *opéra comique*, and, incidentally, of French thought and manners from the rise of the genre in mediaeval Christendom through its fine flower in the Age of Reason to its decline in the romanticism and scepticism of the post-Revolution era. Never again will we confuse the French *opéra comique* with English comic opera, but there were moments when Mr. Cooper's history tended towards the encyclopaedic.

We wished the concluding remark—"a superficial age can only giggle: true laughter comes from the depths"—could have been made the theme of an historical inquiry into the death of *opéra comique* and of her nearest kin in England.

R. L.

The Electronic Musical Instrument Manual. By Alan Douglas. Pp. viii + 143. (Pitman.) 1949. 18s.

The sparsity of literature on the subject makes the appearance of this book particularly welcome and it should go a long way towards filling the gap.

A basic knowledge of musical physics and electronics is assumed but the treatment is practical and mathematics have been reduced to a minimum. The style is lucid, factual and readable.

Following an introductory chapter on the fundamentals of sound, the author deals with conventional methods of generating musical sounds by means of strings, reeds, pipes, etc. It is shown that noise, as distinct from purely musical sounds, plays an important part in defining the character of a particular instrument. Finally the analysis of various tones is discussed. This leads logically to a brief description of conventional pianos

and organs and it is explained how the characteristic attack of the former is produced.

The section dealing with the nature and production of electrical oscillations, save for one or two inaccuracies, is particularly good. Mechanical and valve generators are described in some detail, together with methods of mixing oscillations to produce complex musical tones containing correctly proportioned harmonics.

The design of amplifiers, tone control methods and loudspeakers are reviewed and there is an interesting section describing the salient features of a number of the better known electronic instruments, including the Novachord, Solovox and the Hammond, Compton and Wurlitzer organs. The book concludes with a discussion on recent advances in the art and possible lines of development. A good bibliography appears at the end.

Three points of criticism arise. Discussing music amplifiers the author states that 4 per cent. harmonic distortion is reasonable and "only just perceptible to a trained ear". This is surprising when the generally accepted modern standard for high quality amplifiers is of the order of 0.1 per cent. and is indeed being demanded by discerning musical people.

Referring to loudspeakers, it is not clear whether the cabinet shown is an infinite baffle or a reflex enclosure, actually it most nearly resembles a quarter wave pipe or labyrinth as it is usually called. Again, regarding horn loudspeakers, it is stated that there is "no justification for their use". On the contrary, there is no doubt that speakers of the Klipschorn type would vastly improve the performance of any electronic instrument and at least one manufacturer is interested in this application.

These criticisms, however, should not detract from the general usefulness of the book which otherwise represents a successful effort to present the wide field of electronic musical instruments within the small space available. It should certainly be read by all musicians, experimenters and engineers interested in this fascinating subject.

W. J. T. G.

Concert Pitch. British Standard 880. Pp. 18. (British Standards Institution.) 1949. 2s. 6d.

The history of the efforts to establish a universal standard of pitch is curious. Evidently until there was a method of measuring vibrations there was no way of establishing a universal standard and it was not until 1859 that a French commission, which succeeded in getting Auber, Berlioz and Meyerbeer among others to serve on the same committee made the first attempt to establish an absolute. This decided on A at 435 cycles per second, but the actual decree took no notice of the variations that a high or low temperature may effect particularly with wind instruments and organ pipes though in the commission's report it was suggested that the tuning forks necessary to establish this pitch should be tested at a temperature of 50° F. This was confirmed at the international congress of Vienna in 1885, which, moreover, added recommendations for the tuning of wind instruments. Meanwhile, in England, these findings were ignored and by 1874 the English A was 455 cycles per second, that is to say over a semitone higher than on the continent. As a result many singers, of whom Sims Reeves is perhaps the best known, refused to perform unless the pitch were reformed. This was at length done in 1896 and the new philharmonic pitch of A = 439 cycles was adopted. This still differed from the continental pitch but not by so excessive a degree. Finally, in 1939 yet another congress was held, this time not ignored by the British as Vienna had been, and a new standard of A = 440 cycles adopted. Whether this will be as ineffective as the Vienna decision remains to be seen. In the meantime, we have yet another weapon against our friends who boast they have absolute pitch.

R. G.

Just Intonation and the Combination of Harmonic Diatonic Melodic Groups. By A. D. Fokker. Pp. 80 + vi. (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.) 1949. Gld. 6.

This book has nothing to do with the so-called "just intonation" invented *a priori* by nineteenth-century theoreticians. The author uses "just" in the sense in which it has always been used by musical scholars from Thomas Morley to Sir Donald Tovey;

and by "just intonation" he means true intonation, in performance on strings or with voices, of the essential intervals in a musical composition—the only musical meaning.

The author defines his objective in the opening paragraphs: "stress must be laid on a special training to acquire a just intonation of perfect intervals and chords". The master of the choristers in any of our cathedrals has the same objective. But the author's method is different from his. The reason is given in the author's third paragraph:

"Sir Donald Tovey, in his article on 'Harmony' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, dealing with the theoretical possibilities of the future, says: 'Harmony has not found a place for so simple a natural phenomenon as the seventh note of the harmonic series'. I am attempting to find that place."

He uses a notation for intervals derived from the harmonic seventh that is based on one used by Tartini. He develops this notation on lines intended to permit the representation, on the stave, of music in which his new intervals are used. The last 24 pages of his book contain brief four-part examples, written by Jan van Dijk to illustrate the author's hypothesis. The performance of these examples will bring his hypothesis to trial. This bringing of hypothesis to experimental test is of the essence of the scientific method, and is what we should expect from a distinguished physicist like the author.

No speculation about the validity of the author's premisses and assumptions can replace the conclusions of practical trial. Meanwhile it would be premature to express any conclusions about the new scales, sub-scales, and musical *genera*, that the author has invented; though your reviewer would need some convincing that just intonation (in performance) could contradict a shrewd pronouncement by Christiaan Huygens (seventeenth century) for which the author's musical exercises do not appear to make due allowance. As quoted by Robert Smith in his *Harmonics*, this ran:

"No voice or perfect instrument can always proceed by perfect intervals without erring from the pitch at first assumed. But as this would offend the ear of the musician, he naturally avoids it by his memory of the pitch, and by tempering the intervals of the intermediate sounds, so as to return to it again."*

There is one significant fact about the harmonic seventh. All the diatonic and chromatic intervals of the musical scale can be expressed in terms of the octave, the perfect fifth, and the major third, and would in effect be so produced as part of the prevailing harmony in sixteenth-century polyphony. Thus, using familiar shorthand:

a major tone	= 2V—VIII
a diatonic semitone	= VIII—V—III
an augmented fourth	= 2V + III—VIII
a diesis (G#A♭)	= VIII—3III

and so on. The harmonic seventh cannot be so expressed; and this suggests that though it could occur, more or less fortuitously, in sixteenth-century polyphony, it would do so only as one of Huygens' intermediate sounds (*i.e.* as an unessential note, not forming part of the prevailing harmony). This seems to be an inevitable conclusion for sixteenth-century music, but experiment with the musical examples given would explore the possibility of modern just intonation with a widened choice of essential intervals.

L. S. L.

NEW EDITIONS

Design in Music. By Gerald Abraham. Pp. viii + 55. (O.U.P.) 1949. 3s. 6d.

A Hundred Years of Music. By Gerald Abraham. Pp. 320. (Duckworth.) Second Edition. 1949. 21s.

A Handbook on the Technique of Conducting. By Adrian C. Boult. Pp. 47. (Hall: Oxford. London agents, Goodwin & Tabb.) Seventh Edition. 1949. 5s.

The first of these is a reprint in book form of a series of articles written for the *Hallé* magazine. It deals in simple language with fugue, variations, the sonata principle and

* MUSIC REVIEW, November, 1944, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 215.

the concerto principle and can be recommended as a clear exposition of fundamentals for the general reader.

Professor Abraham's *A Hundred Years of Music* could almost be said to have established itself as a classic before the war, although the first edition appeared only in 1938. The author takes the death of Beethoven as his point of departure and, in this new edition, has brought his survey almost fully up to date, providing some twenty years bonus over his allotted span. The book is thoroughly readable and provides a notable example of English criticism at its most thoughtful. The various judgments passed are remarkable for their justice.

Sir Adrian Boult's well-known handbook makes yet another welcome reappearance, this time with a new cover and some new illustrations. The first edition was published in 1920.

G. N. S.

Reviews of Music

SPOHR—A FORGOTTEN ROMANTIC

Louis Spohr. *Sechs deutsche Lieder für eine Singstimme, Klarinette und Klavier*, op. 103. (Bärenreiter Verlag, Cassel. 1949.)

None of the Great Romantics is as clean forgotten as Spohr, who in his day could seriously compete with Paganini as a violinist, and with Beethoven and Weber as a composer, both of whom he outlived for several decades. Born in 1784—i.e. 13 years before Schubert—and brought up in the firmest of Mozart traditions, yet he was destined to witness the tremendous transformation going on in music between the death of Beethoven (1827) and the completion of *Tristan* in the year of his own death (1859). Spohr was the first to introduce "Faust"—the favourite subject of every later Romantic—into the musical orbit. In his Opera *Jessonda* (performed 1823, in the year of Weber's *Euryanthe*) he even anticipates the chromatic features of Wagner's principal *Tristan* figure. As an old man he delighted in conducting the *Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser* for bewildered audiences at Cassel. Undoubtedly Spohr's music contains certain expressive elements which may have by now become commonplace through Wagner's and Liszt's methodical use of them, but which acted as a powerful stimulant in their day. By preserving classical texture, despite the intrusion of daring modulations and chromatic harmonies, Spohr appears to the detached listener of 1949 as a very belated Classic, in the neighbourhood of Schubert, whom he resembles in his naive Rossini clichés as well as in the ponderous "Innigkeit" of his romantic melodies.

It is an excellent idea of the City of Cassel and of the "Niedersächsische Musikgesellschaft" to resuscitate from the musicians' Limbo at least "selected works" of Spohr. They have made a good beginning with six German songs, accompanied by clarinet and pianoforte, a combination which was later favoured by Brahms who certainly seems foreshadowed in the nordic wistfulness of some of Spohr's tunes. The songs, op. 103, inspired by the clarinet-player Hermstedt, were composed in 1837 and produced soon afterwards at Frankfurt. They won special praise from Mendelssohn, who ordered a score from the composer. The clarinet part is elaborate, concerto-like and yet intensely lyrical; the voice part, however, is of folksong simplicity, whereas the piano indulges in Spohr's favourite device of gliding, chromatic harmonies, thereby adding an iridescent hue to the homespun "Biedermeier" atmosphere of the music. These songs (on romantic poems by Geibel, Reinick, Hoffmann von Fallersleben—authors well known from Schumann's two volumes of songs) certainly deserve a revival.

The edition of F. O. Leinert is praiseworthy (except for the unnecessary transposition of the B flat clarinet into C for the benefit of the accompanist). The engraving is impeccable and the editor's informative preface will be read with interest by everyone who can read German. A translation into English or French would have been welcome. As a new and unusual aspect of the music of the German Romantics in its formative years this work deserves universal attention.

H. F. R.

Howard Ferguson. *Four Diversions for orchestra on Ulster airs.* Full Score. (Boosey and Hawkes.) 15s.

Shostakovich. *Pianoforte Concerto, Op. 35* (arr. 2 pianofortes, 4 hands). (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 9s. 6d.

Montague F. Phillips. *Pianoforte Concerto No. 2 in E, Op. 32* (arr. 2 pianofortes, 4 hands). (Chester.) 12s. 6d.

Ferguson's *Diversions* should prove acceptable to all kinds of orchestras: they rely chiefly on the appeal of the excellent Irish tunes employed, though this is not to say that they are mere arrangements. The title is apt and composer's fancy awake. The four pieces are tastefully scored and would prove successful both in the Albert Hall and on Southend Pier—this is to offer them praise, not condescension.

The two piano concertos are vastly different in style but not in value: that of Shostakovich is now popular, presumably by virtue (or vice) of the drunken trumpet version of *Poor Jenny is a-weeping* in the *finale*. The best part of it is the charming slow movement, where this composer always finds himself. His talent is essentially reflective. Mr. Phillips' work is well enough executed but its invention has not enough individuality to justify the complete reliance on lush harmonic clichés.

Four Saints in Three Acts. Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein. Vocal Score (Music Press, Inc., New York.)

This is described as an opera. That sentence might well be the whole of this review. But it does not seem fair to judge such a *fantasia* as this simply by looking at it on paper: presumably the spectacle is more important than the music or the words. In fact the producer, we are told, is free to invent any *scenario* whatever. Maurice Grosser, responsible for that set out here, believes "that any practicable interpretation of the text is legitimate". Since in these days of modern science almost anything is practicable, a really imaginative scenarist with the help of a really unimaginative millionaire could have the time of his life (perhaps the last time of his life). If the spectacle is truly more important than the words or music, it had better be. For both these seem to me a very climax of insignificance.

Soulima Stravinsky. *Pianoforte Sonata in B flat (1947).* (Chester.) 8s. 6d.

Victor Babin. *Three Fantasies on Old Themes* for two pianos. (Augener.) 15s.

Igor Stravinsky's son has produced a pleasantly limpid piece of writing that makes no pretensions to importance. The idiom is conservative without being dull, and largely contrapuntal. This composer lacks vivid melody and in his slow movement finds himself forced on to an elaborately ornamental style. The whole work is of the type that thinks itself rooted in Bach and the slow movement is an example of this manner, which mistakes ornament for substance. But the general effect of the three movements is one of a certain witty smoothness, and should make a pleasing interlude.

The *Fantasias* by Babin are amiable light music: in their *genre* they are not comparable with Ferguson's orchestral *Diversions*, which are in much better taste. Babin tends to the flamboyant (witness his none too sensitive treatment of *The Piper of Polmood*); the best effort is the middle one, *Hebrew Slumber Song*, but the third, *Russian Village*, is not a bad showpiece for two pianists at a party.

Two songs by Michael Arne. *The Invitation; Invitation to Ranelagh.* (Augener.) 1s. 6d. and 2s.

Singers will be grateful to Ella Ivimey for providing good accompaniments to these graceful airs: that to the first she has made from the figured bass and the other she has fully composed. Both are excellent, and the songs themselves most charming. R. S.

Havergal Brian. *Prelude and Fugue* in C minor for piano. (Augener.) 3s.
Double Fugue in E flat for piano. (Augener.) 5s.

These works, composed in 1924 by a musician of 47, mainly self-taught (according to *Everyman's Dictionary of Music*), offer a curious contrast. The *Prelude* and *Fugue* are romantic in character, the former harking back to Chopin in its arpeggios followed by a heavy choralelike theme more Russian than Polish, used as a bass; the *Fugue*, too, is of a romantic rhapsodical texture. The *Double Fugue*, on the other hand, which runs to twenty-six pages, with a section marked *andante* and later *più lento* (pp. 10-18) seems to hark back to Beethoven's op. 106. The subjects are virile and rhythmical, but the counterpoint is so inspissated that in many places it seems to need four hands, if it is to proceed with clarity. There is some pleasant two-part writing on p. 22. One wonders what Reger would have thought of it.

Norman Dello Joio. *Duo Concertato* for violoncello and piano. (Schirmer, Chappell.) 4s.

Two pages *andantino*, five *allegro animato*, one *tempo I*, this piece is full of feeling and expression and rewarding for both instruments; there is passion but no bravura in the central section. It requires a pianist with a singing touch who knows how to give single notes their full value against a sustained note or passage on the strings; otherwise its undoubted poetry is lost.

Geoffrey Collings. *Sonatina* for violin and viola. (Chester.) 5s.

This graceful three-movement work, with an allusion to its opening *andante* on the last page, is to a considerable extent a two-part invention. Where there is chord writing, as in the central *larghetto*, it is invested with lucidity. The *fugato* finale has nature and spirit. The *Sonatina* is warmly to be recommended to amateurs of real intelligence.

Phyllis Tate. *Nocturne* for four voices. Full Score. (O.U.P.) 8s. 6d.

Those who heard this "chamber cantata" for soprano, tenor, baritone, bass soli, string quartet, double bass, bass clarinet and celesta broadcast under Mosco Carner on 30th December, 1947, will be best able to appreciate it. The early (1939) poem of Sidney Keyes, on a night-and-death theme, is treated atmospherically, largely chromatically, without apparent melodic invention, the vocal line being wholly recitative. There seem to be no vast tides, no "under-pulling currents" beneath this delicately spasmodic sky. The use of the celesta does not naturally respond to anything in the poem. The nocturne is keys, not Keyes. Perhaps that does not matter musically; poetically it does.

Lennox Berkeley. *Introduction and Allegro* for solo violin. (Chester.) 3s.

A study: 44 bars *lento* followed by 107 *allegro* (key A minor), of which the first two bars are rhythmically identical with the start, minus the upbeat, of the scherzo of Mendelssohn's D minor Trio (op. 49); there is skittishness here, but no fairies.

Mozart. *Oboe Concerto* in C major (K. 314). (Boosey & Hawkes.) 5s.

First-edition-fans as well as music-lovers may be glad to possess what appears to be the first publication of the flute Concerto in D in what Einstein has proved with tolerable certainty to be its original form (*Mozart, His Character and Work*, p. 283), in a Hawkes Pocket Score. It is based on old MS parts found in the library of the Salzburg Mozarteum.

VENUS AND ADONIS

John Blow. *Venus and Adonis*. Tercentenary Edition. (Editions de L'Oiseau Lyre, United Music Publishers, Ltd.)

It is significant of the late development of English self-consciousness in music that the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary* contains no notice of this work under "Blow", "Masque",

or its title. Had we in 1652 possessed engravers like Israel Sylvestre, Chauveau and Le Pautre, the fêtes of Charles II's court might have attained a renown comparable to *Les Plaisirs de l'Île enchantée* of 1662 and to the subsequent entertainments at Versailles and, as a natural consequence, this music might have been thrown into bolder relief and the curiosity of a more immediate age than our own been whetted. It may be so, and one wonders how far Dolle's six engravings to Settle's *The Empress of Morocco* may have helped to save Matthew Locke's *Orpheus and Euridice*, an opera embedded, as Prof. Anthony Lewis indicates, in our first illustrated play. At all events, manuscripts, and notably Additional 22100, "Mr. Dolbin's Book Anno Domini 1681/2", have been the source of the present handsome volume, graced, not with the *Amphion Anglicus* engraving, but with the reproduction of a portrait head of John Blow.

There is nothing exciting in this masque, though much that is charming, as the spelling lesson in Act II, until the famous Ground is reached. From that point we are in the region of *Dido and Aeneas* of seven years later. Yet the actual close does not recall this so much as, by reason of the libretto ("Mourn for thy servant, mighty God of Love"), "Mourn, all ye Muses" in *Acis and Galatea*; so that, when one looks at the work as a whole, it reveals itself as a foreshadowing of Handel's cantata more than of Purcell's opera, though Adonis is bass, like Polyphemus, not tenor like Acis, and a villain, the boar, does not enter into the piece. I have detected only two musical slips: the clef on the top stave of p. 34 should be bass not treble, for Adonis is singing, and (a tiny matter) B flat has dropped out after the treble clef at the foot of p. 87.

E. H. W. M.

Guglielmi Dufay Opera Omnia. Edited by Guillaume de Van. Vol. I: Motetti (qui et Cantiones vocantur). Pp. xxiv + 30. Vol. II: (Isorithmici dicti). Pp. xxxii + 96. (American Institute of Musicology in Rome.) 1947 and 1948.

These two fine volumes are the first not only of a complete edition of Dufay but of "a complete and uniform *corpus* of the polyphonic art of three centuries of the declining Middle Ages" to be published by the American Institute of Musicology in Rome at regular intervals. This is a conception grand in all senses of the word and we may count ourselves fortunate that in these troubled times there exists an institution capable of carrying it out. Let us count ourselves fortunate, too, that the practical execution of the scheme is in the hands of such a scholar as Mr. de Van. Some may regret that the edition of Dufay projected by that great mediaevalist Heinrich Besseler has remained incomplete; their regret will at least be modified when they examine the fruits of Mr. de Van's editing. His prose is sometimes rather curious and he makes some odd statements (*e.g.* that "it would be easy indeed to copy a symphony of Beethoven in the notation of Guillaume de Machaut") in his description of his method of transcription, a description (incidentally) that surprisingly omits mention of the name of Johannes Wolf. But his editorial work—his collation of sources, his critical apparatus, his analyses of the isorhythmic motets, and so on—is superb.

Mr. de Van's preface to the second volume—containing the isorhythmic motets—takes too academic a view of that remarkable type of work:

"The isorhythmic motet is assuredly one of the most splendid creations of the musical thought of mankind. The rigid laws governing its composition brought about a rationalisation of that most irrational of psychic activities—artistic inspiration; and by means of numbers, of which music is a sonorous expression, they succeeded in subjugating the movements of musical phantasy to the solid framework of a preconceived idea, product of the rational mind. What could be further removed from our present conception of music than this art, whose smallest details were foreordained, and to which any sort of lyric sentiment was as foreign as to the numbers that determined the form and dimension of the work. It is indeed hardly proper to call by the same word "music" that product of scholastic rationalism, and the creations of to-day, whose fundamental laws were edicted in order to make of music the vehicle of sentiments born in the heart of man. . . . The isorhythmic motet is the purest expression of a hermetic art, whose subtleties can only be grasped by the innermost regions of the mind, by those faculties which seem to lie midway between the *mens* and the *anima*. Such music was not written to please the ear, and those who seek therein a message for the heart must needs be disappointed" . . .

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And so on. But that is how people used to talk about *The Art of Fugue*, and certain recent performances have demonstrated that an isorhythmic motet can be as musically satisfying as a Bach ricercar—to those who do not approach it with demands that would be more properly addressed to the nineteenth-century romantics. Isorhythm, like imitative polyphony, is only a device for constructing music; the quality of the music constructed by its means depends on the constructor. Dufay himself, as Mr. de Van admits on the next page, "succeeding in creating genuine masterpieces of melody, expressed by isorhythmic formulae which must rank amongst the most complicated of their kind". This volume two of the *Opera Omnia* itself provides the evidence.

The whole edition will run to twenty volumes, of which Three to Ten will contain the Masses, Nineteen and Twenty the often delightful *ballate* and *rondelli*; supplementary volumes will include a number of anonymous compositions attributed to Dufay by Dr. Lawrence Feininger. It is most handsomely produced.

G. A.

Mantle Child. *Suo-Gân* (Welsh Lullaby), for piano. (O.U.P.) 2s. 6d.

The Lullaby is subjected to running accompaniment and varied harmonization. However, the composer does not show much invention in the use of either resource.

Herbert Fryer. *My Love's an Arbutus*, for piano. (O.U.P.) 2s. 6d.

A pleasant piece for the pianist with dabbling fingers. There is again a folk melody round which a running accompaniment is woven, and a few minutes' enjoyment can confidently be predicted for all sight-readers.

Christopher Le Fleming. *Egypt's Might is tumbled down*. (Chester.) 2s. 6d.

An imaginative ritornello gives this simple song some emotive power. The retention of the same melody for both verses is aptly conceived, since the accompaniment effectively suggests the change of mood; but the device does involve some awkward setting of the words.

Guy Weitz. Symphony No. 2, for organ. Third, fourth and fifth movements. (Chester.) 5s., 4s. and 5s. respectively.

The first two movements of this work are not to hand. The movements under review would form useful voluntaries, with many particular organ effects admirably calculated. The melodic material and its treatment are somewhat reminiscent of César Franck.

A. Khachaturyan. *Pictures of Childhood*. Piano solo. (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 4s. 6d.

Khachaturyan excels at writing music "in modern idiom" which is nevertheless imme-diately attractive. These pieces should be popular, and ought to be a boon to the conscientious teacher of Appreciation who wishes to introduce modern music without being able to master the technical difficulties which so much of it offers. An added virtue of these pieces, from his point of view, is the variety of modern idioms which they employ: side-slipping chromaticism in *Legend*, echoes of Borodin in No. 8, everywhere the grace notes which characterize Russian music from the *Polovtsian Dances* to *Les Noces*—a new Survey of Russian Music, one would say, if it were not for the curiously Hindemithian Fughetta at the end. In spite of the title, one is rarely reminded of Schumann, even in pieces as closely parallel as the *Little Horse* and the *Knight of the Hobby Horse*. For all the charm of these pieces, it is the synthetic childhood of the cartoon film which Khachaturyan evokes rather than the warm and living scenes of Schumann's vision.

Inglis Gundry. *Heyday Freedom*. Orchestral Suite. Full Score. (Hinrichsen.)

I am sorry to be able to say little in favour of this Suite since, as implied in the composer's note, it was obviously a heartfelt expression of the composer's relief at his return to land after a period of service at sea. But when one hears or studies a work it is not, of course, the mood which inspired the composition which forms one's judgment, but the skill and invention which the composer has shown in embodying the mood in tones. Inglis Gundry shows a nice sensitivity to orchestral colours: his treatment of the strings at 15, and the pedal points for the horns in the fourth movement, for instance, show a remarkable sense of orchestral imagination; and there are many happy touches in the slow movement. But this care for instrumental colour is set against an equally remarkable carelessness in arranging harmonic movement: some of the cadences are very feebly contrived (such as those after 23, and 28 for instance); whilst the successions of consecutive fourths in the upper parts very soon pall on the ear. Nevertheless there is a pleasantly lighthearted sense of gaiety in the quick third and fifth movements; and the composer is adept in the invention of motives if not of melodies.

Haydn. *Adagio* from Symphony No. 13 in D. Arranged for cello and piano by Leonard Isaacs. (Chester.) 2s.

The slow movement of this early Haydn Symphony is a cello solo ready made, accompanied only by string chords in regular quaver groupings. Mr. Isaacs has, for the most part, made a faithful piano transcription of this accompaniment. His arrangement of the second section is freer, occasional imitative figurations being added; however, the attempt to make the piano part interesting is carried out with good sense of style.

MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND VIOLA

Gordon Jacob. *Prelude, Passacaglia and Fugue* for violin and viola. (J. Williams.) Score 2s. 6d.

Bohuslav Martinů. *Three Madrigals* for violin and viola. (Boosey and Hawkes.) Score 7s. 6d.

It is interesting to study two works for this unusual combination, if only because it shows how different can be the approach of two skilled musicians to a medium for which there are few precedents. Martinů calls his pieces madrigals; but it is Jacob who gives most attention to the linear aspect of the combination, whilst Martinů more fully exploits instrumental sonorities. (In fact the reason for the title, a favourite one with Martinů, is by no means obvious; the episodic character of the pieces may perhaps be a clue, except for the fact that, in the third of them, there is a full recapitulation of the first section.) It is, indeed, the dissimilarities between the works which are striking—differences not only of idiom but also of aim. Dr. Jacob's work is happily unpretentious; the movements are short but skilfully put together; the craftsmanship is careful, the taste impeccable (though the absence of passion leads to a certain squareness of phrasing); there is much to admire and little to love. Beside such elegance, Martinů's *Madrigals* are untidy and gauche: the movements end with anything but "Bach-like punctuality"; cadences are wobbly; arresting themes well up and disappear, unheard again (most strikingly in the third piece which in other respects is the most square cut of the three). Yet there is such a passion in the utterance that the music imposes a logic which is independent of its form,—the logic of its own vitality. And for all the instrumental interest,—of the second piece particularly,—one forgets the combination for the sake of the stuff of the music itself.

Bohuslav Martinů. *Variations on a theme of Rossini*. For cello and piano. (Boosey and Hawkes.) 5s.

This work, written for Piatigorsky as a contribution to a wider recital literature for the cello, was first performed in 1943. Martinů treats the theme as a subject for development rather than for variation, and the results show more emphasis upon virtuosity than upon musical interest.

Mussorgsky. *Khovantchina Prelude*. Miniature Score. (Boosey and Hawkes.) 2s. 6d.

This is a useful addition to Boosey and Hawkes' library of miniature scores. Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration brilliantly colours the composer's scene painting and is worth the scrutiny which the score makes possible. The piece by itself is incomplete and the end of the short *Prelude* simply asks for the curtain to rise. Since, however, it is not likely to do so here for some time, we may be thankful for the fragment that we have.

Stravinsky. *Oedipus Rex*. Miniature Score. (Boosey and Hawkes.) 11s. 3d.

It was a true instinct which led Stravinsky to cast his opera in the form of a tableau- oratorio; for one of the factors which is constant, no matter what style is being imitated at any particular moment, is the static quality of the music. As in many other works by Stravinsky, whole passages have no harmonic movement at all; but in *Oedipus* the absence of movement seems more pronounced by reason of the prevailing rhythmic monotony. As a result many passages gain in effectiveness: the chorus' sombre opening and closing pronouncements become the more telling from the continuing ostinato: the stiff phrases of Oedipus' opening air gain in angularity from a bass which rarely moves more than a semitone. Yet it is still surprising, twenty-two years after the work was written, to find that for Stravinsky harmonic movement can mean stuttered successions of diminished sevenths (in Creon's air); or to discover this hoary old chord being employed to emphasize Oedipus' shame at the discovery of his common birth.

There are other discoveries to be made in this score: many which reveal Stravinsky's skill, like the ironic echo of Oedipus' earlier music by the messenger; many which emphasize the poverty of the work as a whole, like Jocasta's air, almost the silliest music the composer ever wrote. But there are no discoveries to be made here which are likely to shake the Faithful from their admiration, or to convert Infidels from their scepticism. Stravinsky, in 1949, remains unassessed, and judgment of his music still springs from passionate but not impartial conviction.

N. G. L.

Technical Report

CONTRAST EXPANSION

"WILLIAMSON" amplifier with tone control stage, £34; Contrast expander unit, £18 10s.: Pick-up pre-amplifier, £7 15s. (CJR Electrical and Electronic Development, Ltd., Hubert Street, Aston, Birmingham, 6.)

With the generous co-operation of the manufacturers, the above equipment has been subjected to thorough test under good listening conditions and in conjunction with an Enock moving-coil pick-up, a Sugden "Connoisseur" motor and a Mordaunt speaker system.

The "Williamson" amplifier is well-known to readers of *The Wireless World*, and there is nothing about the pre-amplifier which calls for particular comment. But this contrast expander is the first we have heard which did not do more harm than good, and as such we make no further excuse for bringing it to our readers' attention.

The idea of contrast expansion is not new. Indeed, the writer had experience in the radio industry of a primitive model some fourteen years ago, but these early attempts mangled the music so unmerrily that contrast expansion seemed to hold no thrills for the musician. Fundamentally it should have done so for the following reason.

It is fairly well understood that the dynamic range of a piece of music is more or less drastically compressed when that music is either transmitted over the radio or recorded on gramophone records, the latter case being what concerns us here. Without exploring the reasons for this compression, we may perhaps take leave to doubt its basic necessity; but as it remains an old-established practice, any promising method of compensating for it must be given an enthusiastic welcome.

The unit under review provides a maximum of 15 dB rise in gain on climaxes, or any lesser degree of expansion according to the position of the continuously variable control. Skilfully used in conjunction with organ and heavy orchestral records, it has produced some most promising results and we recommend all who are seriously interested in recorded music to make a point of hearing it at work. This particular expander promises more than it in fact fulfils for a variety of reasons, some of them quite independent of the design of the unit. Broadly speaking, and within practical limits, the louder you reproduce recorded sound the more you expose its imperfections: but, in parenthesis, the corollary does not hold good.

Now the best modern gramophone records show a steady if slow improvement in engineering technique and are even now amenable to expansion treatment . . . but only the best ones. For the expander, obviously, treats the music, surface noise, pressing faults and cross-modulation distortion without discrimination, and these various distortions take on a vicious quality of their own with increased amplification. The makers of this expander claim that it introduces no extra audible distortion on its own account, a claim which we are not able either to substantiate or refute; the fact remains that some extra distortion *was* apparent on climaxes and that this originated, in part at least, from the records.

To turn for a moment to a practical detail: the relationship between the positions of the expander and volume controls is a very critical matter. It would be an advantage if both these controls could be "geared a little lower" to provide more movement for a given amount of variation, and the provision of a calibrated scale in each case would enable the user to mark the best settings on his record labels, for the variation from record to record is liable to be great.

We feel that the expander might with advantage be made to take effect more nearly instantaneously and the one-second fading lag seemed rather too long, the latter at least could be varied manually. But the unit provided a most interesting experience, and we shall look forward with great interest to further developments and refinements. The contrast expander, without doubt, has come to stay.

Gramophone Records

Verdi: Un Ballo in Maschera.

Caniglia: Ribetti: Barbieri: Gigli: Giusti: Bechi: Niccolini: Novelli: Pasero and the Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, c. Serafin.

His Master's Voice DB 9075-81 and 9083-91. DBS 9082. 99s.

This is a characteristic Italian performance with the end always in view. Serafin keeps a steady beat and maintains a good ensemble almost throughout. There is, however, little or no subtlety and Caniglia is by no means alone in ignoring Verdi's calls for shades of tone below *mezzoforte*. The records were made some years ago when Gigli's was still a good voice and before Bechi had become chronically addicted to shouting. Indeed, Bechi takes most of the honours of this set with Gigli and Ribetti sharing the rest. The orchestra is often outstandingly good and never less than adequate.

The recording is very varied. At its best it is remarkably smooth and realistic, but some sides deteriorate very sharply towards the centre and many of the review samples had objectionably noisy surfaces. Where possible, readers are advised to hear these records before buying them; some of the music is really fine (*e.g.* the last four sides) and the performance is undeniably authentic, but it must remain a matter for individual decision whether the recording, as such, is consistent enough to justify the expenditure involved in its purchase.

*Brahms: Hungarian Dances, Nos. 2 and 3. Variations on a theme by Haydn, Op. 56a.**
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Furtwängler.

His Master's Voice DB 6932-34. 18s.

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68.
 Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. van Beinum.
 Decca AK 1895-99. 23s. 9d.

Violin Concerto in D, Op. 77.
 Ossy Renardy and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. Münch.
 Decca AK 2055-59. 23s. 9d.

*Double Concerto in A minor, Op. 102.**
 Kulenkampff and Mainardi with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Schuricht.
 Decca AK 2025-28. 19s.

This set of the Haydn Variations is a winner from all points of view, a real musician's performance recorded with unusual fidelity. The two concerto sets are the best available at present in this country, but neither is exemplary. Renardy and Münch manage to emasculate the violin Concerto, most effectively depriving it of all its rhetorical grandeur, and serve up a drawing-room performance of some charm, little dignity and less power. The double Concerto, as here recorded, sounds quite as difficult as it undoubtedly is. One of Brahms' most tenacious conceptions, it makes even fewer concessions to felicity of expression than was usual with the works of his maturity, with the result that listeners often feel both soloists and orchestra to be "at odds all round". I do not think it fair to castigate this set for bad intonation, as some critics have done, though any fool can hear their "bone of contention". What emerges from this performance, first and foremost, is just that tough resilience that would have made all the difference to the records of Op. 77. The records of the Symphony are better, as such, than Furtwängler's recent version for His Master's Voice: the interpretation is not.

*Richard Strauss: Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24.**
 London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Krauss.
 Decca AK 1892-94. 14s. 3d.

*Ariadne auf Naxos, "Es gibt ein Reich".**
 Cebotari and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.
 His Master's Voice DB 6914. 6s.

Elektra, closing scenes.
 Schlüter, Welitsch, Schöffler and supporting cast with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.
 His Master's Voice DB 9393-96. 24s.

Poor Strauss! If the mewling obituary disparagements of our national press were to be taken at their face value he must have composed in vain, and in such bad taste, too. Luckily we can drown such insular balderdash in the stream of opulent sound of which he alone had the secret, and of this Ariadne's aria is a superb example. This particular record must be given a special welcome as one of the finest ever issued by His Master's Voice: Cebotari sings far better than I ever heard her in life, the orchestral playing is magnificent under the unspecified conductor, the recorded balance is exactly right and the surfaces excellent. A record not to be missed.

The excerpts from *Elektra* are by no means as well done. The balance varies from reasonable to downright bad and the distortion towards the disc centres is most objectionable. Nevertheless, the playing and some of the singing (notably Schöffler) are good and we are glad to have this set as being far better than nothing.

* Strongly recommended.

Tod und Verklärung, not one of the composer's happiest efforts but still of more interest than much of the music one hears, is given a clean, careful and on the whole accurate performance and very well recorded. There is some surface noise, a trace of recorded hum, and you may find it wise to lift the bass response of your reproducer a little.

G. N. S.

THE MEDTNER SOCIETY

Concerto No. 1 in C minor, Op. 33.

Nicolas Medtner (piano) with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. George Weldon.

(a) *The Ravens*, op. 52, No. 2.

(b) *Serenade*, op. 28, No. 2.

Oda Slobodskaya (soprano), acc. by Nicolas Medtner.

Sonata Tragica, op. 39, No. 5.

Canzona Matinata, op. 39, No. 4.

Nicolas Medtner (piano).

His Master's Voice DB 6900-06. 42s.

To write about Medtner's music is as difficult as attempting to describe a man without a face who wears everybody else's clothes—Schumann's coat with Brahms' coat-tails, Scriabin's shoes and Glazunov's gloves. On the whole I should say Medtner is less obvious than Rachmaninov (an inevitable comparison), but by no means more subtle in consequence; he is certainly no less cosmopolitan in outlook, but the international language he has acquired for himself is so commonplace that it has no value even as gossip for a leisure hour. The only distinction is Medtner's own piano playing which can be unreservedly recommended, especially in the *Sonata Tragica*, although all the tragedy is in the title of this piece, not the music. The two songs expertly sung by Madame Slobodskaya have at least one virtue: they are immediately recognizable as Russian in origin, and not only because they are performed in their native language.

Brahms: Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15.

Rudolf Serkin (piano) and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, c. Fritz Reiner. Columbia LX 1162-67. 36s.

This big Concerto has in Serkin the big pianist it needs. He makes light work of Brahms' sometimes overloaded keyboard writing, and plays the sequential passages in the slow movement with extraordinary sensitivity. Owing to the disagreeable stridency of the recording it is hard to tell just how well the orchestra plays, particularly when the musical climate is climactic: but it would seem that the P.S.O. is as efficient and highly-trained as similar products from the American stables.

Lambert: Saraband for the Followers of Virgo, Bacchanale
(from the Ballet *Horoscope*).

Liszt—arr.: Lambert—orch.: Jacob: Galop
(from the Ballet *Apparitions*).

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Constant Lambert.
Columbia DX 1567-68. 8s.

This music is bright and "modern" enough to satisfy the "progressive", but not too astringent to frighten away those still wedded to *Les Sylphides* and *The Sleeping Beauty*. But the ballet is badly needed if we are not to inspect too closely the highly stylized formula taken from a 1920 textbook that seems to be the source of Mr. Lambert's industry—we can hardly call it inspiration. Oddly enough, it is the *Galop* that has the most genuine musical (music-hall) vitality: perhaps after all three heads *are* better than one. Recording and performance are competent.

Richard Strauss: *Rosenkavalier*: "Quinquin, Er soll jetzt geh'n", and
"Kann mich auch an ein Mädel erinnern".

Hilde Konetzni and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.
Columbia LX 1135. 6s.

Strauss' lamented death makes one put the old question—was he born great, did he achieve greatness, or did he have greatness thrust upon him? Certainly in these two episodes from *Rosenkavalier* Strauss did achieve greatness, and I fancy that the closing scene of Act I, where so much of his best music lies, will endure while there remain minds enough to appreciate his profound understanding of the all-too-human heart. No doubt he was a worldly composer: but Strauss' kind of worldliness, in spite of its materialist association, gives us a humanity and humaneness that will last as long as man continues to like himself more than a tree. This burden of civilization (and it was increased by Strauss' choice of librettist) is a heavy load for any singer to bear. Not only does the music make its special demands, but to sing and play the part of the Marschallin to perfection, the singer must become a Marschallin herself: not an easy job for any member of a society rapidly jettisoning and discarding the customs and conventions of an aristocracy for which it has less and less time. In the Marschallin's resignation to her fate of growing old (and with what grace and dignity she does it), she not only relinquishes her hold on Octavian but says farewell to her own youth, personified for her, of course, by the young Count. There is real nobility in her gesture and her music, a nobility of thought that flowered first in Strauss himself. Unfortunately Konetzni seems to understand few of these things and her version can in no way compare with the old (abridged) version of the opera issued by H.M.V. with Lotte Lehmann. Konetzni's voice has neither the range nor the power of Lehmann's and instead of the perfectly phrased *crescendo* we have a disconcertingly short-winded > < which effectively destroys Strauss' conversational style at its most subtle. Apart from her deficiencies of technique, Konetzni, with her present performance, adds to the prevalent misconception that Strauss' orchestra does the talking and the voice is frequently superfluous. Such is not the case, not even in a latish work like *Ariadne auf Naxos* where, if anything, Strauss had further developed his polyphonic treatment of voice and orchestra. The balance though between the two is delicate and unless the score is obeyed meticulously the voice is bound to become submerged. On this record for instance (particularly in "Quinquin, Er soll jetzt geh'n") Konetzni indulges in all manner of inaccuracies. She pays little attention to the accented off-beats of the vocal line and consequently is fractionally out of step with the orchestra. The result, if not complete confusion, is at least a blurred and blunted chaos lacking musical and psychological point. She sings "und später fahr ich zum onkel Greifenklau, der alt und gelähmt ist, und ess' mit ihm" blissfully unaware of the reticent tragedy of Hofmannsthal's words and Strauss' falling sevenths. Worse is the senseless *ritardando* on the very last words she sings: "Jetzt sei Er gut und folg' Er mir". The phrase is encased within an octave (as distinct from the sevenths that dominate the scene while the Marschallin hesitates to dismiss Octavian from her presence) and represents the decision made and finally delivered: to drag the phrase is fatal, musically and psychologically inept. The Marschallin of course would have done no such thing and there is no indication of a *ritardando* in the score. Not that I should have expected Konetzni to have noticed that, or the significance of Strauss' act in using for this aria the key in which he opens the whole opera.

Schubert: *Rosamunde*—Overture, Op. 26.
London Symphony Orchestra, c. Josef Krips.
Decca K 2071. 4s.

Krips has the sense not to produce this Overture as if it were a prelude to a Grand Opera. A pleasant, if anything under-played, performance: an attitude of mind on the part of the conductor which well suits the abilities of the L.S.O.

Schubert: Sonata No. 3 in A, Op. 120.

Albert Ferber.

Decca K 1515-16. 8s.

Mr. Ferber plays the shortest and most lyrical of Schubert's piano sonatas with sympathy but not sentimentally, and he is mercifully sparing with his *rubato*. I am a little suspicious of his cloudy pedalling, but this may be due to an over-resonant recording.

Schubert: Der Lindenbaum.

Die Post.

Heinrich Schlusnus (baritone), acc. Sebastian Peschko.

Decca K 2068. 4s.

These two rather sombre songs (and dramatic too in the case of *Der Lindenbaum*) are somewhat stiffly and sometimes quaveringly sung by Herr Schlusnus. In *Die Post* he gets into odd difficulties with his aspirates in the reiterated "Mein H-erz!"

Puccini: Butterfly: "Il Cannone del Porto!" and "Spoglio è l'orto?"

L. Albanese and L. Browning with orchestra, c. F. Weissmann.

His Master's Voice DB 6615. 6s.

Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana: "Tu Qui Santuzza?" and "No, No, Turiddu".

Sara Scuderi and Aldo Ferracuti with orchestra, c. Alberto Erede.

His Master's Voice C 3769. 4s.

The Puccini receives a high-powered performance from all concerned, particularly from Albanese with whom Browning fights something of a losing battle. Nevertheless this is Puccini *par excellence* for those who like him served up piping hot. The Mascagni is almost equally effective but cruder and less happily contrived. *Cavalleria* hasn't *Butterfly's* rough and ready psychology which makes it attractively complex for simple minds. In other words *Cavalleria* is several steps down the ladder, on a rung which I don't much mind having missed. Both orchestras remain anonymous—in the Puccini with some justification.

D. M.

Beethoven: Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano, Op. 12, No. 2.

Max Rostal and Franz Osborn.

Decca AK 1958-59. 9s. 6d.

Measured against Professor Rostal's highest standards of performance and criticism, his performance is highly criticizable. Thus he misunderstands several of the first movement's *sforzati* (bars 34, 59, 60, 150) and, partly in consequence, contributes illogical *sforzati* and accents of his own (bars 33/1, 42, 59/1, 60/1, 81, 149/1/4). The accents in bar 149/1/4 are particularly embarrassing, since Osborn, a few bars further on, renders the phrase consistently. Bars 25 ff. take first place among the passages in which Rostal obturades, but bars 132-5 (end of side 1) are inspiredly phrased by both performers. Nor does the sensitively deferred echo effect of bar 45/4-6 lack inspiration, but when Rostal does the same thing in the repeat and again in the recapitulation, he behaves like his present medium, the gramophone record. There is beauty, if perhaps too much *espressivo*, in the slow movement, though the g" sharp in bar 14, stronger than the preceding a", upsets the phrase, in a mistaken attempt to show its awareness of the piano's entry; nor should the three slurs in bar 39 induce the violinist to so many accents. Osborn's weakest spots are the opening of the third movement and the subsequent parallels, where the left hand always enters a fraction too soon, thus disturbing the syncopation. With his unsolicited *sforzati* in bars 39/1, 40/1, 47/1, 48/1, and in the corresponding places in the recapitulation, Rostal leads Beethoven's *sforzati* once more *ad absurdum* and again Osborn plays the same passage logically. Exactly how far the recording is to be made responsible for the fact that the two instruments do not mix well I cannot tell;

in any case this sound relationship presents a problem that started with Beethoven and still exists.

I have concentrated in some detail on the demerits of this rendering because Rostal-Osborn performances tend to establish themselves as bible. Needless to say, they—including this one—offer a great deal.

Handel: The Messiah: Overture and Pastoral Symphony.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 6879. 6s.

The performance of the Overture has texture rather than living form. In the *Grave* Beecham does not always look after his semiquavers, and the accents on the *Allegro's* bars 19/2 and 23/2 are inept, Beecham or no Beecham. The execution, as distinct from the interpretation, is good, though the subject's first entry suffers from faulty intonation. The *Pastoral Symphony's* array of heavy accents is grotesque, and further caricatured by the bad recording. That of the Overture, however, is fair.

Handel: Semele: "Where'er you walk", and Xerxes: "Ombra ma fu".

Richard Lewis and Kathleen Ferrier with London Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent.

Decca K 2135. 4s. 9d.

Lewis is nervous and therefore sharp (the lesser of two alternative evils), and the balance is unsatisfactory.

It would appear to be time that Ferrier stopped being nothing but (a) *nobilissima* and (b) accurate. Her beautiful voice (well recorded) lacks variety, her phrasing life and freedom, because she hardly ever draws upon her all too dormant inspiration. There is too much vibrato in the violins; the recording of the orchestra is muddy and again ill-balanced.

Haydn: Symphony No. 40 in F major.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 6823-24. 12s.

Beecham makes his numerous short-term intentions and his lack of a comprehensive policy quite clear. His often brilliant and sometimes invigorating rendering is not without what Furtwängler would call "illegal effects", though it is difficult to imagine how the old beefy Beecham-rit. at the end of a movement can have an effect on anybody. While the playing of the Trio is not up to expectations, the set could be considered well made if it were true in pitch.

*Mozart: Idomeneo, Act III: "Tiefe Stille um mich", "Frühlingsdüfte".**

Erna Berger with Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Krips.

His Master's Voice DB 6617. 6s.

Motet: "Exsultate, jubilate", K.165.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf with Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Süsskind, and George Thalben-Ball (organ).

Columbia LX 1196-97. 12s.

Piano Concerto in E flat major, K.271.

Lili Kraus with Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Süsskind.

Parlophone R 20570-73. 24s.

The better Berger sings, the more she gets on my nerves. If you can bear unmitigatedly Germanic Mozart singing, without a ray of southern sun, here is your record. It is well made (though in places the orchestra should be more distinct) and offers an effort that should get top marks for everything for which any marks are available. For my own part, I turn with relief to the very variable recording of Schwarzkopf's nowise

* Strongly recommended.

impeccable performance. I cannot confer the official asterisk upon this set, but—strictly between ourselves—I strongly recommend it. For whatever happens in its vagarious (and at least in one place unbearable) course, it shows two musical musicians at work. Hear Süsskind's phrasing of the violas' tune in the second movement; listen to Schwarzkopf's sensitive echo in the Hallelujah; her unconventional and highly intelligent dynamics in this movement's second colorature; how, that is, she invests the last two semiquavers of bar 105 with feeling upbeat significance; how she links bar 96 with the oboe's echo of bar 97 and at the same time draws an invisible thread through her rest to her own continuation (bar 98), all this not by lengthening, but by imperceptibly (and no doubt unconsciously) shortening the d'' of bar 96/2, thus creating an open end which imagination is forced to fasten to what follows; how, on the other hand, she slightly prolongs the g'' of bar 80, the greater (temporal) distance making her fly all the more passionately and clear-sightedly to the cadence; and how, again, the final cadence's top C is exactly as long as it has to be to avoid lifeless exactitude on the one hand, or a hysterical breakdown of the phrase on the other. But above all, listen to the syncopated passage of bars 110 ff. They start wrongly, to be sure. Schwarzkopf does not heed Mozart's *fp*, being forced therefore to give a push to the (really unaccented) first quaver (f') of bar 112. A convinced wrong rendering, however, is better than an unconvinced "right" one. Nor indeed is anything wrong with the passage once the f'' is over. With marvellous, masculine strength Schwarzkopf maps, marks and moves the rhythm of the syncopations, an achievement of which the castrato for whom the motet was written would not have been capable, for femininity is more masculine than neutrality. The only thing that mystifies me in this performance is how Schwarzkopf's mistake in the slow movement's bar 27/1, where she sings c'' sharp—e'' instead of e''—c'' sharp, could have slipped through; or can she or Süsskind be thinking that her version is correct?

Süsskind again proves a musician, if this time a sloppy one, in K.271. For the rest, however, we have strongly to dissuade the reader from this set, not only because of the variform faults of the recording (including sharp pitch), but even more so in view of Lili Kraus' poor performance. We have no patience with the sort of *rubato* that can't hold a dotted note (bars 86 and 215 of first, and end of second movement), or which offers such insensitive phrasing (*e.g.* bars 69 ff., 140 ff. [!!!], 162 ff., and 278 ff. [!!!] of the first movement, or bars 16 and 48 ff. [!!] of the second), not to speak of all the arbitrary accents (*e.g.* first movement, bars 96/1 and 98/1, or second movement, bars 20/3, 33/1, and 85/1). Among the orchestral deficiencies which may escape notice are the first violins' *glissandi* in the first movement's bar 34. A doltish, anonymous "Analytical Note" accompanies the set; I suggest that as long as writing on music is on its present level, everything published should be signed.

Deeply depressed, I returned to the Schwarzkopf records for passionate purification. My gratitude I find difficult to describe. The labels of the *Idomeneo* disc bear five misprints in the German titles.

*Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms (1930).**

London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, c. Ansermet.

Decca AK 1753-55. 14s. 3d.

Emphatically recommended to possessors of the score and of the, I gather, unsatisfactory Columbia set with the composer's own rendering. Whether listeners unsupported by the score and uncastigated by the previous recording will consider their money well-spent I dare not decide. One must, however, thank the engineers for what they have achieved in this partly indissoluble task, though not for the extraordinarily bad surface at the end of side 4. Nor am I sure that the balance, particularly the choir's, could not have been better; its effect could certainly have been improved by fairer choral intonation. But to have a recording of this gigantic Symphony—"composée à la gloire de Dieu" and "dédiée au 'Boston Symphony Orchestra'"—which is as acceptable as this one, is quite something.

* Strongly recommended.

Wagner: Tannhäuser: Elisabeth's Gebet.

Kirsten Flagstad and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Issay Dobrowen.
His Master's Voice DB 6795. 6s.

Nobody can sing like Flagstad, so one can't raise the energy to criticize her imperfect interpretation and impersonation. The voice is pretty well recorded, and while the balance could be much better and the cadential chords could not be much worse, the disc is recommended.

Wagner: Overture, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg.

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Hans Knappertsbusch.
Decca K 1905. 4s. 9d.

An impossible recording of a, *summa summarum*, extraordinarily swift interpretation that would have its phraseological points, if only one could hear them. The woodwind are safely tucked away somewhere, so that (e.g.) the love motif in bars 27 ff. is entirely emasculated. Not that this porridge of a record (which on top of everything runs sharp) gives anyone else his due; the return of the motif of the Mastersingers' entry at the end of the recapitulation, for instance, is made to sound as if the brass had forgotten all about it, entering belatedly upon the timp.'s reminder. The technical standard of the performance is not imposing, either, unless you are impressed by numbers, for there is a multitude of a's and a''s in the sixth bar before the end. H. K.

Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F and No. 5 in D.

Boston Symphony Orchestra, c. Koussevitzky.
His Master's Voice DB 6764-67. 24s.

*Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D.**

Boyd Neel Orchestra, c. Neel.
Decca K 1889-91. 14s. 3d.

The problem of balance in *Brandenburg No. 2* has not yet been solved by recording engineers. They appear frightened by the trumpet, with the usual result that not only the trumpet but the oboe as well are swamped by the strings. The two versions of No. 5 show that Boyd Neel has taken the greater care. He has paid scrupulous attention to detail and the flute-playing of Gareth Morris deserves special mention.

*Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 in F.**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Kleiber.
Decca K 1824-28. 23s. 9d.

A fine performance, refreshingly free from "virtuoso" interpretation. The string tone is occasionally thin, but woodwind are first class. Recording good, but the breaks between sides are not always skilfully contrived.

Puccini: Tosca, "Tre sbirri, una carrozza" and "Tosca e un buon falco".

Gianpiero Malaspina and Covent Garden Orchestra, c. Mudie.
Columbia DX 1514. 4s.

A fine rendering spoilt by some rather thick recording which distorts the chorus.

Donizetti: La Favorita, "Fia dunque vero".

Stignani and the Augusteo Orchestra, c. Bellezza.
Columbia LX 1106. 6s.

Not one of Stignani's happiest efforts, though she is not helped by the poor recording. I have yet to hear this superb singer well recorded. G. B.

* Strongly recommended.

Berlioz: *Roméo seul et la grande Fête chez Capulet; Scène d'amour* (*Symphony, Roméo et Juliette, Op. 17*).

N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Toscanini.

His Master's Voice DB 6665-67. 18s.

A complete recording of a really first-rate performance of this "symphony" would be welcome and would probably give a better impression of the work than any stuffed-shirt concert production. These two movements are welcome, though Toscanini's performance of the *Queen Mab Scherzo* would also have been acceptable. The playing of these excerpts is superb, especially in the brilliant carnival music: there is no heavy romanticizing anywhere and Berlioz is allowed to speak as the instinctive classic that he is. This is not to say that the performance is cold; it is extremely vivid and, in the love scene, deeply felt. The recording, however, leaves much to be desired: the opening is good in quality of tone, and the better part of the first piece is cleanly (though somewhat baldly) recorded. But the *Scène d'amour* is only half heard: there is a woolly murk obscuring much of it, particularly in the softer passages. In spite of this, the discs are strongly recommended.

R. S.

Correspondence

106, Wildwood Road,
London, N.W.11.
20th July, 1949.

MSS. OF R. O. MORRIS

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—The following MSS. of compositions by R. O. Morris have been deposited in the Library of New College, Oxford, where they can be seen by arrangement with the Librarian:—

1. *Quartet in Miniature* (4 movements), unpublished.
Set of copyist's Parts (Vl. I and II, Vla. and Vlc.). No full score.
2. *Four Elizabethan Songs* for Voice and Piano, unpublished.
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(3) *Maides are simple.* (4) *It fell on a Summer's Day.*
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3. *Sinfonia in C major* (4 movements).
Autograph Full Score.
4. *Suite for Cello and Orchestra* (4 movements).
Autograph Full Score.
5. *Concerto Piccolo for Two Violins and String Orchestra* (4 movements).
Autograph Full Score.
6. *Concertino da Camera* in A minor (3 movements), unpublished.
(a) *Autograph Full Score.* (b) *Copyist's set of Parts.*
(This work consists of three movements of the *Concerto Piccolo* (see item 5) rescored for String Quintet. The third movement of the Concerto is omitted.)
7. *Concertino in F for Small Orchestra* (3 movements).
(a) *Autograph Full Score.* (b) *Autograph piano duet arrangement.*
8. *Suite for Small Orchestra* in B flat major (6 movements).
Autograph Full Score.
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Yours faithfully,

HOWARD FERGUSON,
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